1973.
Our grandparents went to Cape Cod and all we got was this super great beach house that's still in the family in
2019.

It's not easy to leave a lasting legacy. It requires thinking well beyond portfolio strategy to consider longer-term needs, like transferring wealth and minimizing tax implications. Since 1962, Raymond James advisors have carefully created forward-thinking financial plans that protect the things most important to you and your family. **LIFE WELL PLANNED.**

WEALTH MANAGEMENT | BANKING | CAPITAL MARKETS

RAYMOND JAMES
LIFEWELLPLANNED.COM

©2019 Raymond James & Associates, Inc., member New York Stock Exchange/SIPC. | Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. Raymond James Bank, member FDIC. Raymond James® and LIFE WELL PLANNED® are registered trademarks of Raymond James Financial, Inc. Investment products are: not deposits, not FDIC/NCUA insured, not insured by any government agency, not bank guaranteed, subject to risk and may lose value.

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

WILLIAM T. VOLLMANN
Melville's Lost Paradise

IAN FRAZIER
The Snakes That Ate Florida

LANGSTON HUGHES
Exclusive: A Scathing New Essay

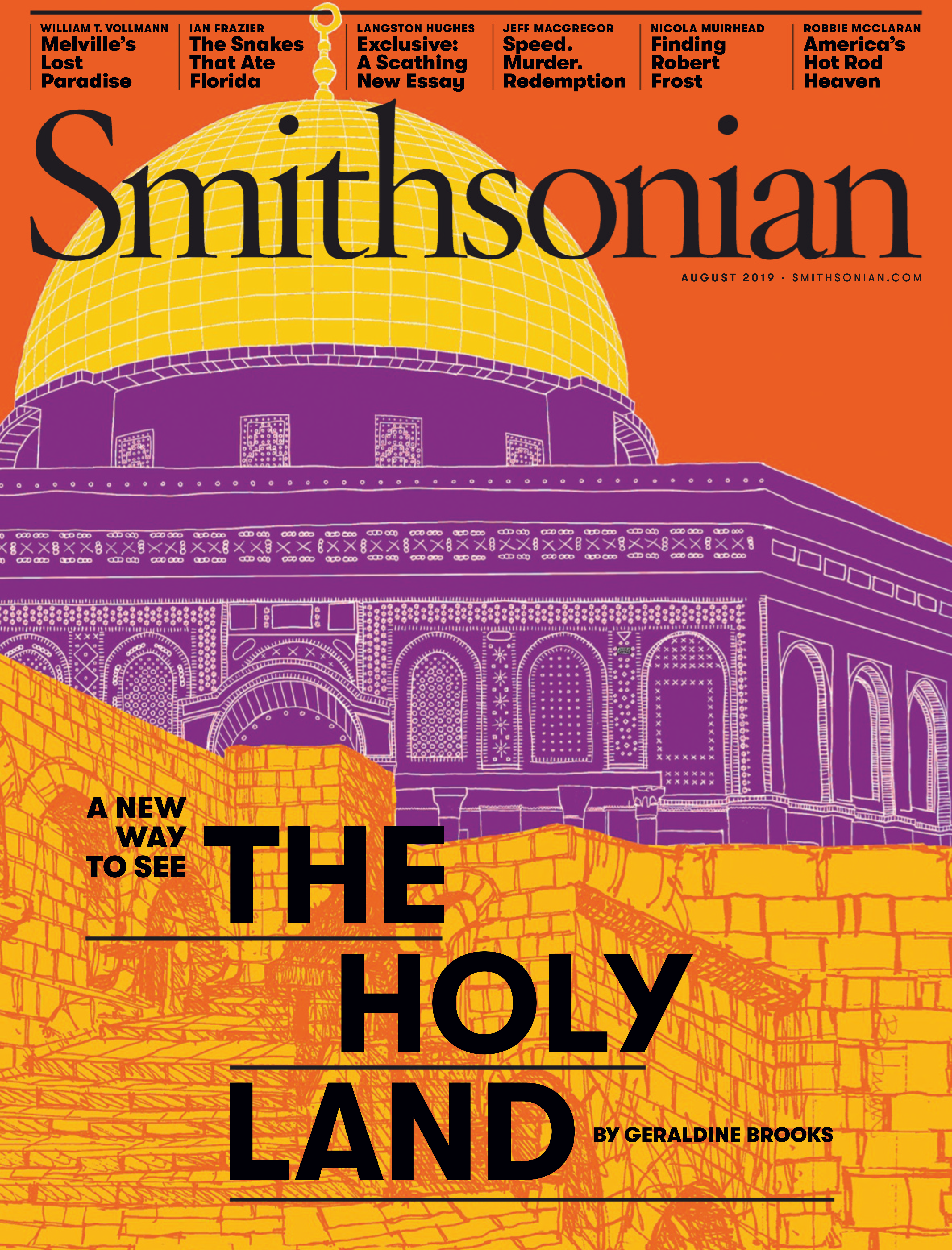
JEFF MACGREGOR
Speed. Murder. Redemption

NICOLA MUIRHEAD
Finding Robert Frost

ROBBIE MCCLARAN
America's Hot Rod Heaven

Smithsonian

AUGUST 2019 • SMITHSONIAN.COM

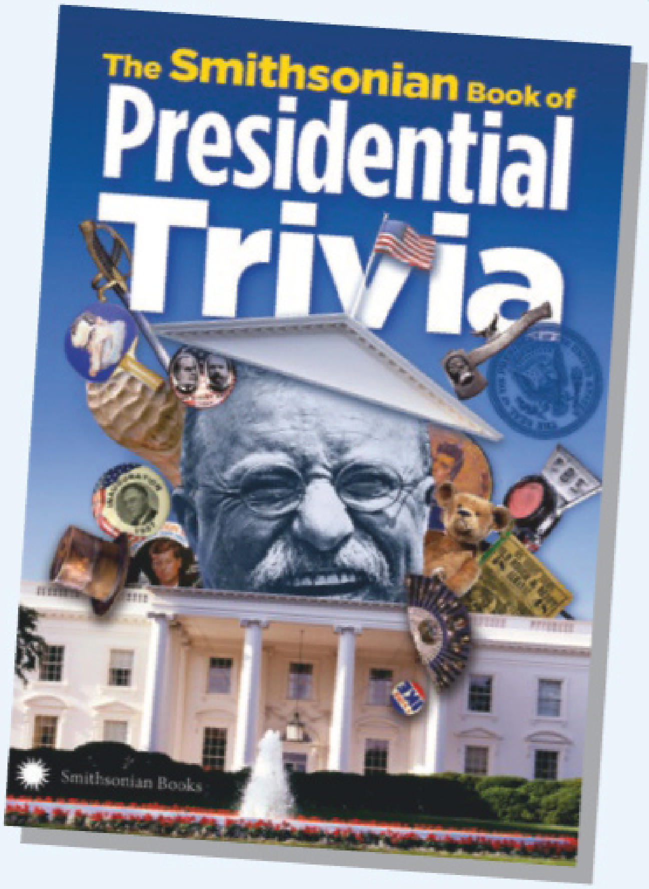


A NEW WAY TO SEE

THE HOLY LAND

BY GERALDINE BROOKS

Q: Should I buy these two books?
A: YES!



“You’re not likely to find a better source for fascinating and little-known details about U.S. presidents.” *THE STAR-LEDGER*

“... an entertaining, enjoyable and informative look at the nation’s 43 presidents (not 44 — see Cleveland, Grover) and every possible subtopic.” KEN RUDIN, NPR’S *POLITICAL JUNKIE*

“*The Smithsonian Book of Presidential Trivia*... is chock full of data sure to stump even the most knowledgeable presidential buff.” *POLITICO*

THE SMITHSONIAN BOOK OF PRESIDENTIAL TRIVIA
Paperback, 240 pages, 115 B&W photos, ISBN: 9781588343253, $12.95

Smithsonian + Trivia
= SMART FUN

The Smithsonian Book of
Air & Space
Trivia

“*The Smithsonian Book of Air & Space Trivia* gives a bite-size overview of human flight from primitive attempts at aircraft to commercial jets, space in pop culture, and military aviation. The book’s Q&A format makes it easy to pick up for either a minute or an hour.” *FOREWORD*

“A perfect gift for the space geek in one’s life...” *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

THE SMITHSONIAN BOOK OF AIR & SPACE TRIVIA
Paperback, 240 pages,
115 B&W photos,
ISBN: 9781588344618,
$12.95

Smithsonian Books
smithsonianbooks.com

AVAILABLE WHEREVER BOOKS ARE SOLD

Vol. 50 | No. 04

Smithsonian

July • August 2019

features

30

A New Way to See the Holy Land
A Palestinian and an Israeli join forces on a uniquely revealing trip
by Geraldine Brooks

42

Speed Demons
A son returns to a Utah raceway to fulfill the adrenaline-fueled dream of his murdered father
by Jeff MacGregor

56

The Chrome Jewels
Custom car enthusiasts turn yesterday's jalopies into dazzling artworks
photographs by Robbie McClaran
text by Chris Bodenner

Nurse sharks scramble for fish scraps tossed from a wharf in Cook's Bay, Moorea, French Polynesia.

66

SnakeLandia
Giant pythons invade the Everglades, alarming biologists and hunters
by Ian Frazier

82

Geography of Genius
The starkly beautiful landscapes that mystified Robert Frost
photographs by Nicola Muirhead
text by Jay Parini

92

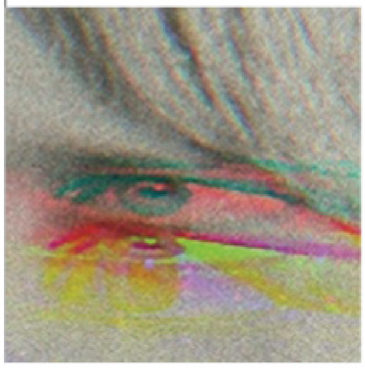
Melville's Lost Paradise
Voyaging to Polynesia in search of the enigmatic author of *Moby-Dick*
by William T. Vollmann

prologue

09 **American Icon:** Smokey Bear
• Crash test dummies speak out
12 **Art:** Photo fails succeed
14 **Food:** Chocolate or vanilla?
• Ancient taste sensations
20 **Literature:** A Langston Hughes discovery
• An encounter in the South
26 **National Treasure:** The Walkman at 40
28 **Origins:** Celebrating the Air Guitar

04 **Contributors**
06 **Discussion**
124 **Ask Smithsonian**
You've got questions? We've got experts

12



Cover: Illustrator **Louisa Bertman**'s vision of the Old City of Jerusalem.

IRENAEUS HEROK; ©SARA CWYNAR AND COOPER COLE GALLERY INC.; (DETAIL)

Smithsonian

EDITOR IN CHIEF Michael Caruso

DEPUTY EDITOR Terence Monmaney

ART DIRECTOR Maria G. Keehan

DIRECTOR OF EDITORIAL OPERATIONS Debra Rosenberg

SENIOR EDITORS Kathleen M. Burke, Arik Gabbai, Jennie Rothenberg Gritz, April White
CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR Quentin A. Nardi
COPY CHIEF Karen Larkins
DIGITAL EDITOR, SMITHSONIAN.COM Brian Wolly
COPY EDITOR Jeanne Maglaty
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR Erik K. Washam
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR Jeff Campagna
DESIGNER Eritrea Dorcely
ASSOCIATE PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR Donny Bajohr
ART SERVICES COORDINATOR Tiffany Y. Ates
WRITER-AT-LARGE Jeff MacGregor

CORRESPONDENTS Amy Crawford, Franz Lidz, Tony Perrottet, Matthew Shaer, Paul Theroux, Clive Thompson, Abigail Tucker
CONTRIBUTORS Ben Crair, Ian Frazier, Richard Grant, Joshua Hammer, Robin Henig, Joanna Marchant, Holly Millea, Liza Mundy, Susan Orlean, Shaun Raviv, William T. Vollmann
ASSISTANT EDITOR Anna Diamond
EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS N. Hamilton, Michelle Strange
DIGITAL EDITOR, MUSEUMS Beth Py-Lieberman
SENIOR WEB EDITOR Megan Gambino
ASSOCIATE WEB EDITOR Jay Bennett
ASSISTANT WEB EDITORS Rachael Lallensack, Jackie Mansky
DIGITAL EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Lila Thulin
INTERN Maddie Burakoff

SMITHSONIAN ENTERPRISES

PRESIDENT Carol LeBlanc
ACTING SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION Alan Chu
CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER Amy P. Wilkins
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, RETAIL GROUP Ed Howell
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMMING John Mernit
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER Grace Clark

HUMAN RESOURCES

DIRECTOR Dana S. Moreland
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR Jennifer Alexander Thorpe
BENEFITS MANAGER Sibyl A. Williams-Green
RECRUITING MANAGER Jay Sharp

ADVERTISING

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CLIENT PARTNERSHIPS Gayle Lambert
SALES DIRECTOR Walker Mason
TRAVEL SALES DIRECTOR Jaime Duffy
ACCOUNT MANAGERS
SOUTHWEST: Nuala Berrells
UNITED KINGDOM: Julian Staples, J.S. Media Associates
JAPAN: Yoshinori Ikeda, Mayumi Kai
KOREA: B.J. Kim
DIRECT RESPONSE MI Media Services, LLC, Marie Isabelle
EVENT SALES MANAGER Leslie MacCallum

MARKETING/RESEARCH

MARKETING DIRECTOR Ellyn L. Hurwitz
CREATIVE DIRECTOR, MARKETING Annie K. Sullivan
ASSOCIATE MARKETING DIRECTOR Nancy Kaplan
MARKETING COORDINATOR Gabrielle Russillo
RESEARCH MANAGER Linda Lawrence

CONSUMER MARKETING

CONSUMER MARKETING DIRECTOR Lisa Dunham
PLANNING DIRECTOR Sean D. McDermott
RENEWALS AND GIFT DIRECTOR Susan Warner
NEW BUSINESS DIRECTOR Paul Masse
RENEWALS & INTERNET MANAGER Michael Ivler
GIFT MANAGER Jonathan Balangon
MARKETING MANAGER, NEW BUSINESS David Lloyd
ASSOCIATE MARKETING MANAGER, NEW BUSINESS Rose Drayton
ASSISTANT RENEWALS AND BILLING MANAGER Nicole Thompson

MANUFACTURING & DISTRIBUTION

VICE PRESIDENT Sarah Kingsley
PREPRESS DIRECTOR Katherine Balch
PREPRESS MANAGER Frank Matthew Hale II
PREPRESS SYSTEMS MANAGER Penie Atherton-Hunt
COLOR AND QUALITY MANAGER Bill Whitcher

ONLINE PUBLISHING GROUP

DIRECTOR, DIGITAL SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY Todd Stowell
DIRECTOR, AUDIENCE & REVENUE DEVELOPMENT Perrin Doniger
LEAD DESIGNER & DIGITAL STRATEGIST Shaylyn Esposito
DIGITAL PROJECT MANAGER & PRODUCER Kathryn Macko-Hardy
MANAGER, SPECIAL PROJECTS & CUSTOM CONTENT Melissa Wiley
DIGITAL PRODUCER McKenzie Johnson
WEB DEVELOPER Sean Henderson
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Sarah Briney

BUSINESS OFFICE

VICE PRESIDENT, OPERATIONS Ed Dequina
ADVERTISING BUSINESS DIRECTOR Edward J. Hayes
FINANCE MANAGER Jay Yousefzadeh
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT MANAGER James A. Babcock

EDITORIAL OFFICES: MRC 513, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7012, (202) 633-6090
SUBSCRIPTIONS: (800) 766-2149 P.O. BOX 420300, PALM COAST, FL 32142-0300, SMITHSONIAN.COM OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES: (386) 246-0470
MAIN ADVERTISING OFFICES: 420 LEXINGTON AVENUE, SUITE 2335, NEW YORK, NY 10170, (212) 916-1300

Smithsonian Institution

SECRETARY Lonnie G. Bunch III

BOARD OF REGENTS

CHANCELLOR The Chief Justice of the United States
CHAIR Mr. David M. Rubenstein
VICE CHAIR Mr. Steve Case

MEMBERS
The Vice President of the United States (Ex Officio)
Hon. John Boozman
Hon. Patrick J. Leahy
Hon. David Perdue
Hon. Doris Matsui
Hon. Barbara M. Barrett
Mr. John Fahey
Mr. Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.
Mr. Michael Govan
Dr. Risa J. Lavizzo-Mourey
Mr. Michael M. Lynton
Mr. John W. McCarter, Jr.
Hon. Lucille Roybal-Allard
Hon. John Shimkus

SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL BOARD
Mr. Robert D. MacDonald, Chair
Mr. Edward R. Hintz, Vice Chair
Mr. Dennis J. Keller, Vice Chair
Ms. Denise M. O'Leary, Vice Chair

NATIONAL BOARD
Mrs. Lisa Bennett, Mr. John F. Brock, III, Mr. Roger W. Crandall, Mr. Edgar M. Cullman, Jr., Mrs. Wendy W. Dayton, Mr. Vincent J. Di Bona, Ms. Sharon Fawcett*, Mrs. Maria Luisa Ferré, Mr. Trevor Fetter, Mrs. Julie A. Flynn, Ms. Brenda J. Gaines, Mr. William J. Galloway, Mr. Rick Goings, Mrs. Nancy Hogan, Ms. Michele J. Hooper, Mr. David G. Johnson, Ms. Jennifer Walston Johnson, Mr. David W. Kemper, Mr. Todd Krasnow, Mr. Allan R. Landon, Mr. Dale LeFebvre, Ms. Cheryl Winter Lewy, Mr. David M. Love, Mrs. Jacqueline B. Mars, Mr. Kevin M. McGovern, Mr. Charles W. Moorman, Mr. Jahm Najafi, Ms. Sarah E. Nash, Mrs. Sarah Perot, Dr. Jorge G. Puente, Mr. G. Jeffrey Records, Jr., Mr. Kenneth C. Ricci, Mr. John C. Ryan, Mr. Philip K. Ryan, Ms. Fredericka Stevenson, Ms. Diana Strandberg, Ms. Naoma Tate, Mr. Michael E. Tennenbaum, Mr. Andrew H. Tisch, Mr. John K. Tsui, Mr. L. John Wilkerson

HONORARY MEMBERS
Mr. Williams S. Anderson, Hon. Max N. Berry, Mr. L. Hardwick Caldwell III, Dr. G. Wayne Clough, Mr. Frank A. Daniels, Jr., Mrs. Patricia Frost, Mrs. Jean B. Mahoney, Mr. Paul Neely, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Mr. Wilbur L. Ross, Jr., Mr. Lloyd G. Schermer, Hon. Frank A. Weil, Mrs. Gay F. Wray (*Ex-Officio)

AMERICAN®
CRUISE LINES

ON THE TRAIL OF
Lewis & Clark
Columbia & Snake Rivers Cruise

Cruise the Columbia & Snake Rivers in complete comfort aboard our elegant new riverboats. Each stop along the epic route forged by Lewis & Clark has its own story, embodied in the history, culture, and beauty of the region. **Small Ship Cruising Done Perfectly.®**

CAELEN WEBER PHOTOGRAPHY

EXPLORE HISTORY

LARGEST STATEROOMS

EXQUISITE CUISINE

WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS WINNER 2018

2018 TRAVEL WEEKLY MAGELLAN AWARDS GOLD AWARD WINNER

Call today for your **FREE** Cruise Guide
1-800-460-6187
AmericanCruiseLines.com

2018 CONDÉ NAST Traveler Readers' Choice Awards

CRUISERS' CHOICE cruisecritic ★★★★★ 2018 American Cruise Lines Best in US & Canada

Geraldine Brooks

The author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *March* eagerly participated in a unique travel experiment: visiting the Holy Land on a tour led by a Palestinian and an Israeli guide (p. 30). “I was lucky to travel with such an open-minded, intellectually curious group,” she says. “It was a privilege to watch as they unraveled the complicated threads of history, emotion and spiritual connection.” Brooks’ Middle East expertise is deep. Her first book, *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*, drew on her years of covering the region for the *Wall Street Journal*. Her most recent novel, *The Secret Chord*, is about King David.

Langston Hughes

“All of the leading Negro writers live in New York or other cities of the North. They do not know and cannot write intimately about the South.” Hughes made that statement in a startling 1933 essay that was published in Russian but never before in English—until now (p. 20). It recalls an encounter between Hughes, one of the leading voices of the Harlem Renaissance, and an incarcerated young black man fleeing a Georgia chain gang.

Robbie McClaran

A fan of muscle cars since he was a teen, the photographer explores hot rod culture on Page 56. “The craftsmanship and the creativity that go into them equal anything I see in most museums.”

Jay Parini

The poet, novelist and screenwriter is the author of a celebrated biography of Robert Frost and, like his subject, a Vermont transplant (p. 82). Parini’s next book recounts his travels with Jorge Luis Borges.

William T. Vollmann

A National Book Award-winning novelist, Vollmann turns what *New York* magazine calls his “hellaciously worldly” gaze on another singular American author—Herman Melville, born 200 years ago (p. 92).

Nicola Muirhead

When the artist first read Robert Frost, she loved “his playful humor and sarcasm when describing the rural life he lived and observed.” Her photos (p. 82), inspired by Frost, aim to make “each frame like a poem.”

Gena Steffens

For this assignment, Steffens journeyed from the Colombian Amazon, where she’s based, to the Florida Everglades, where scientists are battling invasive pythons (p. 66). “I will never forget wading through gator-infested, waist-deep waters tracking a giant snake and photographing one of the biologists wrestling the creature as it flailed and wrapped around him.”

Jeff MacGregor

The magazine’s award-winning writer-at-large is no stranger to burnt rubber and death-defying speed. (p. 42). He spent a year folllowing the Nascar circuit for his acclaimed book about stock car racers, *Sunday Money*.

Irenaeus Herok

Visiting French Polynesia gives “the impression you traveled back in time,” the photographer says. He used a camera drone and other 21st-century imaging technology to evoke Herman Melville’s time there in the 1840s (p. 92).

Ian Frazier

A *Smithsonian* contributor and *New Yorker* staff writer, Frazier felt “keyed up” when he first waded into the Everglades to look for Burmese pythons, among the world’s largest snakes (p. 66). “I was with smart and tough snake hunters and scientists. I loved being out there.” Still, he was taken aback to observe that the enormous snakes slither through swampland so close to housing developments and strip malls.

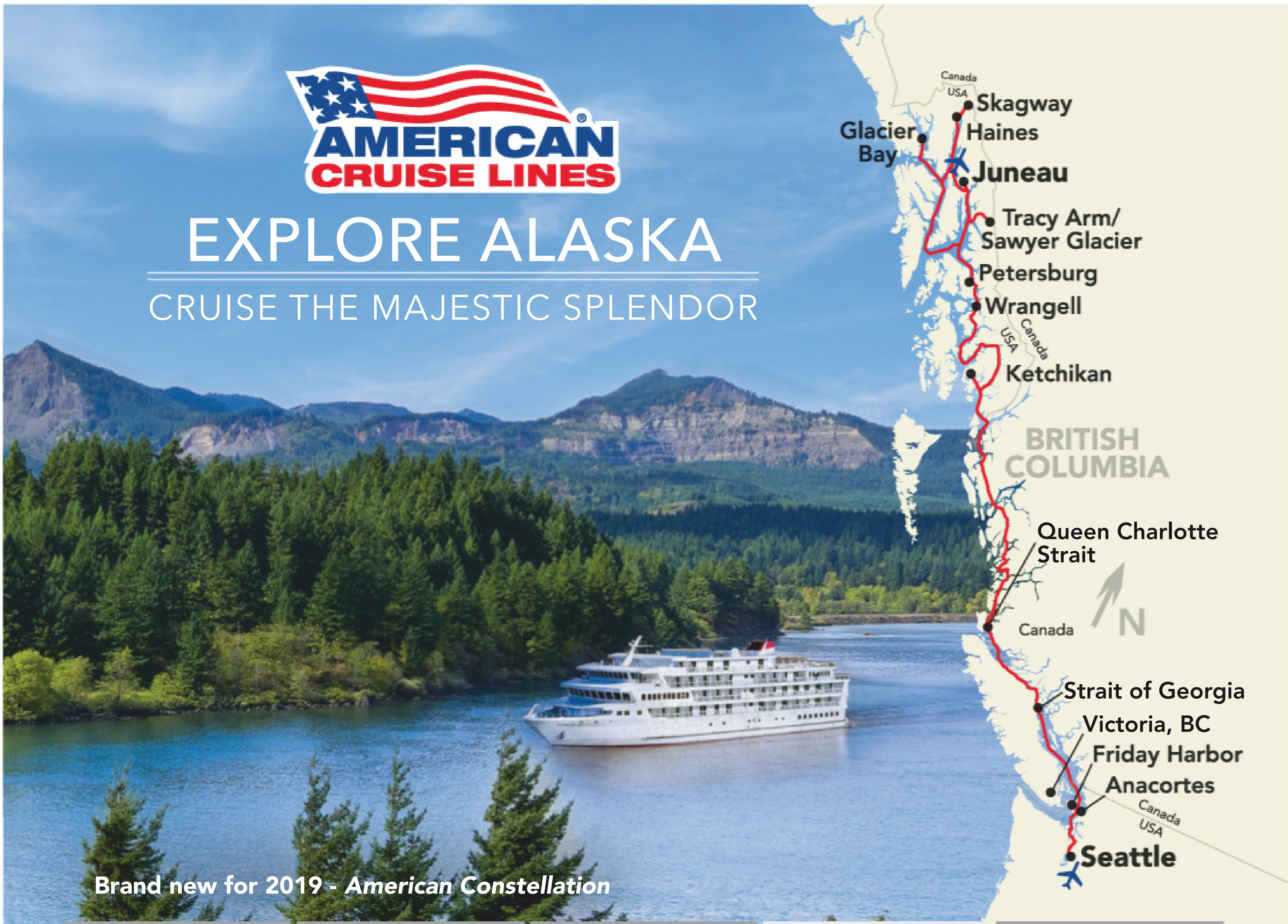
PHOTO REFERENCE: RANDI BAIRD

Illustrations by **Zach Meyer**

AMERICAN CRUISE LINES®

EXPLORE ALASKA

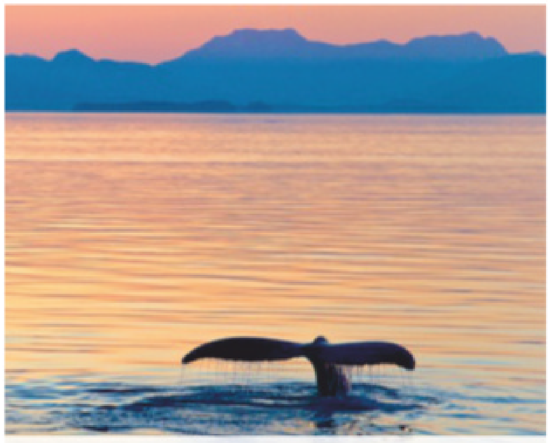
CRUISE THE MAJESTIC SPLENDOR


Canada
USA
Skagway
Haines
Glacier Bay
Juneau
Tracy Arm/
Sawyer Glacier
Petersburg
Wrangell
Canada
USA
Ketchikan
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Queen Charlotte Strait
Canada
N
Strait of Georgia
Victoria, BC
Friday Harbor
Anacortes
Canada
USA
Seattle

Brand new for 2019 - *American Constellation*

MISSISSIPPI RIVER | SOUTHEAST | NEW ENGLAND | ALASKA | PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Explore the untouched natural beauty of Alaska aboard the world's newest small cruise ship. On this unforgettable journey, explore breathtaking scenery and historic treasures, while receiving our hallmark personalized service. Small Ship Cruising Done Perfectly.®



SUNSET ON YOUR BALCONY

LARGEST STATEROOMS

8, 11 & 15-DAY ITINERARIES

WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS WINNER 2018

2018 TRAVEL WEEKLY MAGELLAN AWARDS GOLD AWARD WINNER

Call today for your **FREE** Cruise Guide

1-800-460-6187

AmericanCruiseLines.com

2018 CONDÉ NAST Traveler Readers' Choice Awards

CRUISERS' CHOICE cruisecritic ★★★★★ 2018 American Cruise Lines Best in US & Canada

THIS SUMMER'S DARING VOYAGE TO THE TITANIC BY TONY PERROTTET
PLUS: Mexico's Greatest Living Artist • T. Rex: Still the Champion!
Smithsonian
MAN ON THE MOON
WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE APOLLO 11 MISSION 50 YEARS AGO
BY CHARLES FISHMAN

FROM THE EDITORS

PAUL THEROUX'S PROFILE in June of Francisco Toledo, Mexico's greatest living painter, showed "there are still many good people in the world working to make it a better place," an Oakland, California, reader said. But our story about Stockton Rush's plan to shuttle commercial passengers to the *Titanic* in a submarine gave Chuck Enzenauer a sinking feeling: "I'd suggest we leave deep-ocean exploration to the professionals, and not promote the ocean floor as a tourist destination," he said on Facebook. Our cover story, a penetrating look at the Apollo 11 mission, ignited the greatest reactions. "Like Neil Armstrong, I am a naval aviator and knew him pretty well," says Robert Dunn. "Apollo 11 remains one of the greatest American achievements even after 50 years." Dennis Fakes of Huntsville, Alabama, asked, "Who knew Moon dust smelled? Thanks for this marvelous piece."

To the Moon and Back

Your excellent article was a bit of a shock to me. As a young Air Force captain, I was the technical requirements and standards officer for the Gemini launch vehicle. It was the most challenging job I ever had, and my colleagues' dedication was the highest I ever encountered. I had no inkling of the doubts at the top that you reveal, nor, to my knowledge, did my compatriots—and that was probably for the best.

— **Joseph M. Ware** | San Antonio, Texas

TWITTER: @SmithsonianMag
INSTAGRAM: @smithsonianmagazine
FACEBOOK: smithsonianmagazine

I was in Phuoc Vinh, South Vietnam, during the Moon landing. Because the locals usually spoke of a person acting crazy as "going to the Moon," I heard a lot of Vietnamese saying the Americans have "gone crazy."

— **Michael Stancampiano** | Ocean Shores, Washington

It should be fairly obvious to readers of this article that if we hadn't had the Apollo program, we probably wouldn't be sitting in front of a large computer screen or holding a smartphone reading about it. And, of course, a whole list of other technologies that might not have been developed, either. Thank you, NASA, and the politicians of this country who supported it, for changing the world.

— **Richard Shagam** | Smithsonian.com

Under the Sea

Many think that space exploration is the next frontier, but "Return to the Titanic" shows that the depths of the ocean may be. Not only in the future, but right now in 2019.

— **William Tyminski** | Medina, Ohio

Are you getting your
VIP NEWSLETTER?
IT'S FREE TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS
and it's filled with fascinating history, science
and news about the Smithsonian.
Sign up today at **Smithsonian.com/VIP**

Your article makes it sound as if William Beebe invented the bathysphere. In fact, it was invented by Otis Barton, an engineer and amazing naturalist and author. Barton accompanied Beebe on the dives.

— **Heidi DeVos** | Hartsdale, New York

Correction: In "El Maestro," we transposed the date of the first exhibition of Francisco Toledo's art in Paris. It did not take place in 1936 but, rather, in 1963.

Clarification: Regarding the picture of the Moon on Pages 24 and 25, numerous readers asked if it was a true anaglyph—a stereoscopic photo with two images printed in different colors—because of the offset red and blue details. It is not. We created the image, using an actual black-and-white NASA photograph, to help you feel startled once again by the astonishing feat of seeing the lunar surface at eye level.

CONTACT US

Send letters to **LettersEd@si.edu** or to Letters, Smithsonian, MRC 513, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, D.C. 20013. Include a telephone number and address. Letters may be edited for clarity or space. Because of the high volume of mail we receive, we cannot respond to all letters. Send queries about the Smithsonian Institution to ***info@si.edu*** or to OVS, Public Inquiry Mail Service, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, D.C. 20013.

RULES OF MODERN INVESTING®

#62 IT'S HARD TO BEAT AWARD-WINNING SERVICE, LOW COSTS AND A SATISFACTION GUARANTEE.

#63 RULE #62 MIGHT BE WHY SCHWAB WAS RANKED #1 OVERALL BY INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY.

INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY®
2019
BEST
ONLINE
BROKERS
TOP BROKER OVERALL
#1 IN CUSTOMER SERVICE
#1 IN LOW-COST/FREE ETF TRADING
#1 IN TRADE RELIABILITY

Charles Schwab is the only firm to earn a #1 rating in customer service four times in five years.

CHAT CALL VISIT To learn more about our modern approach to wealth management, visit your local branch, call us, or go to **Schwab.com/CompareUs**

charles SCHWAB

Wealth Management at Charles Schwab

PLANNING | PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT | INCOME STRATEGIES | BANKING

Own your tomorrow.

If you are not completely satisfied for any reason, at your request Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab") or Charles Schwab Bank ("Schwab Bank") will refund any eligible fee related to your concern within the required timeframes. Schwab reserves the right to change or terminate the guarantee at any time. Go to Schwab.com/satisfaction to learn what's included and how it works.

Wealth Management refers to a number of different products and services offered through various subsidiaries of The Charles Schwab Corporation. See Schwab.com/wealth.

The Charles Schwab Corporation provides a full range of brokerage, banking and financial advisory services through its operating subsidiaries. Its broker-dealer subsidiary, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (Schwab), Member SIPC, offers investment services and products, including Schwab brokerage accounts. Its banking subsidiary, Charles Schwab Bank (member FDIC and an Equal Housing Lender), provides deposit and lending services and products.

Charles Schwab has ranked #1 in customer service by Investor's Business Daily for the following years: 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2019.

From Investor's Business Daily, January 28, 2019, ©2019 Investor's Business Daily, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission and protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States. The printing, copying, redistribution or retransmission of this Content without express written permission is prohibited. Results based on an Investor's Business Daily ("IBD") and Technometrica survey of 2,762 visitors to the IBD website between November and December 2018. Those individuals were asked to name and rate their primary online broker. Limiting data analysis to only those firms that were cited by 200 or more participants, six online brokers were ranked based on Customer Experience Index scores for fourteen separate attributes. For further information on how the ratings were calculated, see IBD's Criteria and Methodology.

©2019 Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Member SIPC.(0619-9EDV) ADP107024-01

SimpliSafe

SMALLER.
FASTER.
STRONGER.

Meet the all new SimpliSafe.
It's smaller, faster, stronger than ever.
Engineered with a single focus: to protect.
With sensors so small they're practically invisible.
Designed to disappear into your home.
And blanket it with protection.
More than easy to use—downright delightful.
All at prices that are fair and honest.
It's home security. Done right.

"The best home security system"

WIRECUTTER
APRIL 2018

"...SimpliSafe belongs at the top of your list..."

CNET EDITORS' CHOICE
3/28/18

"A seamless system"

PCMAG EDITORS' CHOICE
4/2/18

Free shipping for a limited time
at SimpliSafe.com/smith

SimpliSafe™

AMERICAN ICON

By
Lyndsie Bourgon

Illustrated by
Corey Schumann

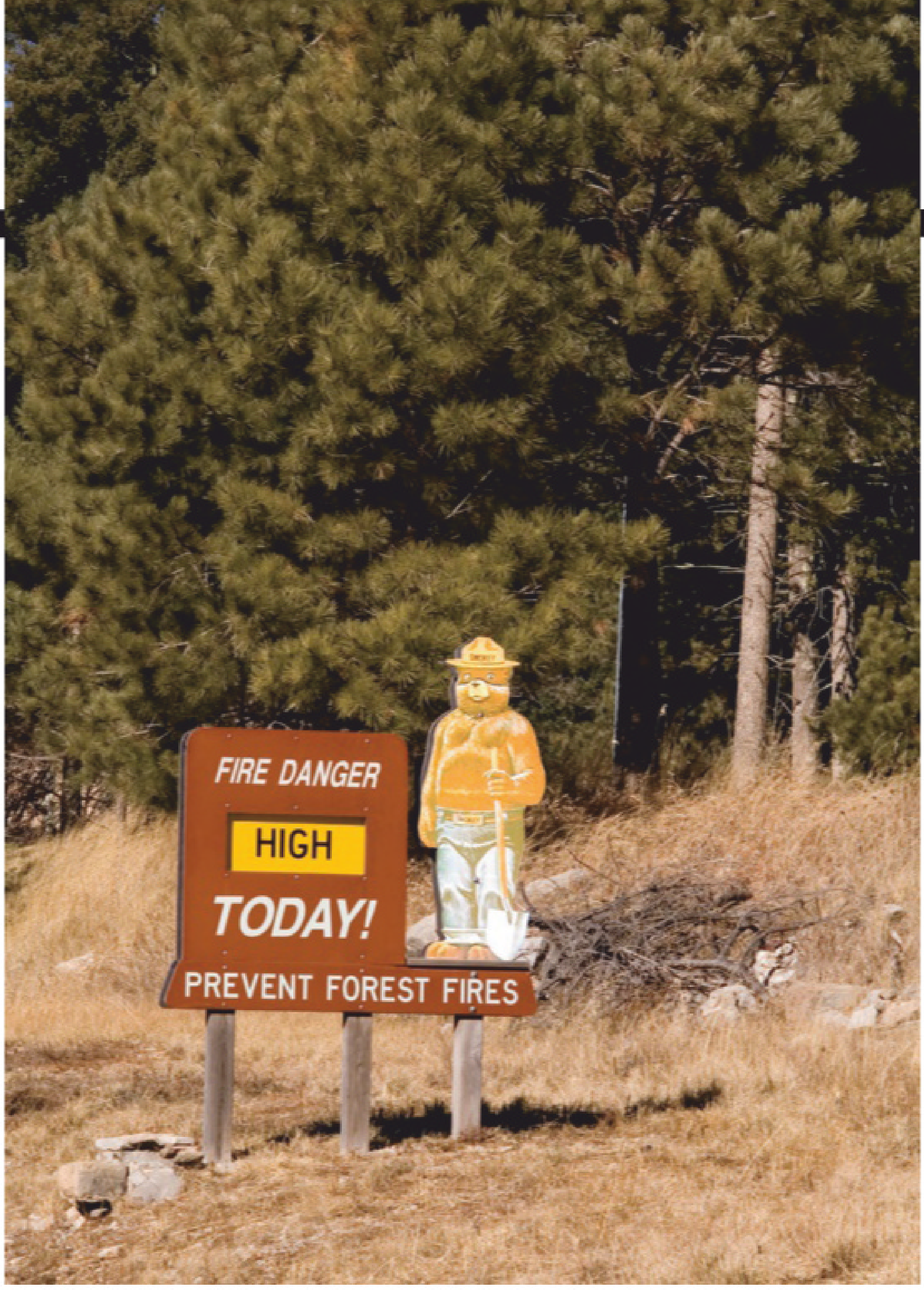
Under Fire

How our beloved Smokey Bear has become a lightning rod in a heated environmental debate

AMERICAN ICON

LAST YEAR, THE DEADLIEST wildfire season in history swept across the western United States and parts of western Canada. In California alone, more than 8,000 fires burned nearly two million acres and cost hundreds of millions of dollars to suppress. In a matter of minutes, a town named Paradise was engulfed in flame and almost completely destroyed; 85 people died.

The United States had been living in fear of such devastation since the early years of World War II when fire was seen as a weapon of war. And for almost as long, we've had Smokey Bear, sweetly but insistently reminding each of us of our role in protecting the country from this danger: "Remember—only you can prevent forest fires."



Smokey can be seen throughout the country promoting the National Fire Danger Rating System, but the cute bear on the sign is often the target of theft.

In 1942, Japanese submarines shelled an oil field outside Santa Barbara, near the 2,700-square-mile Los Padres National Forest. Concerned that fire on the homefront could distract from the war effort, the War Advertising Council and the U.S. Forest Service launched a campaign to raise public awareness of the threat. The early ads looked like many other wartime messages. "Another Enemy to Conquer: Forest Fires," proclaimed a red stamp. "Our Carelessness: Their Secret Weapon," said a poster with Hitler peering down on a blaze. Then Disney temporarily loaned Bambi—who had been introduced in 1942—to the effort, and the public started listening.

Inspired by the power of a charismatic cartoon, the War Advertising Council dreamed up Smokey in his ranger's hat and dungarees. He first appeared in August 1944 pouring a bucket of water on a campfire saying, "Care will prevent 9 out of 10 fires." In 1947, he got his better-known tagline.

Smokey was a sensation. In 1950, when a black bear cub was rescued from a burning forest in New Mexico, he was named Smokey and sent to Washington, D.C., where he lived at the National Zoo. Two years later Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins, the songwriting team behind "Frosty the Snowman," wrote an ode to Smokey. (Called "Smokey *the* Bear" to improve the rhythm, it led to decades of confusion over the character's name.) And by 1964, Smokey was receiving so many letters from children that the post office gave him his own ZIP code; now he has an Instagram account and a Twitter feed, and he's learned to speak Spanish. Today, the Ad Council estimates that 96 percent of adults recognize him—the sort of ratings usually reserved for Mickey Mouse and the president.

> **"THE CRISIS IS NOT THE NUMBER OF FIRES. IT'S THAT WE HAVE TOO MANY BAD FIRES AND TOO FEW GOOD FIRES."**

Smokey's popularity made him an effective spokesbear for the Forest Service's fire prevention message, which helped dramatically reduce fire on America's public lands. Between the 1930s and 1950s, the average number of annual wildfires in the United States decreased by over 40,000. By 2011, the average number of acres burned by wild-

RABH IMAGES / ALAMY; ERITREA DORCELY, *SMITHSONIAN* (DETAIL)

fire each year had dropped from 22 million in 1944 to just 6.6 million. Smokey "ties fire suppression to good citizenship," explains Catriona Sandilands, an environmental studies professor at York University in Toronto. "With him, there is no question that fires are bad, and that individual citizens are responsible."

But what if Smokey was actually wrong about that?

Some scientists now believe that the simple idea that fire is bad has made some forests more susceptible to flame—a phenomenon that they call the "Smokey Bear effect." Areas where fires have been prevented for decades have simply been storing "fuel," like underbrush growth and dead standing trees. Where the changing climate has brought drier conditions, this land is primed to spark easily. Now, a catastrophic blaze, once an unusual occurrence, could be set off by the heat from a lightning strike.

"The crisis is not the number of fires, it's that we have too many bad fires and too few good fires," warns Stephen Pyne of Arizona State University, a leading scholar of forest fire history. "It's equally a problem that we're not doing the good burning that would calm bad fires." Smokey's focus on fire prevention is dated, Pyne says.

Government policy has evolved to include the targeted use of controlled burns—"good burning"—in hopes of preventing larger, unplanned fires. And Smokey's official motto changed subtly in 2001 to reflect this. Now he says, "Only you can prevent *wildfires*"—the idea being that forest fires can be lit and controlled, but wildfires can't. "There is good fire and bad fire, that's what his message is," says Babete Anderson, a representative with the Forest Service. For kids, she explains, fire is birthday candles and campfires. Smokey's message is "be careful with it. Make sure that your fire is dead out."

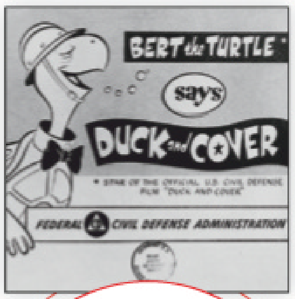
But some fire-prevention experts think it's impossible to separate Smokey from the old notion that it's up to us to tame fire. "Let him retire with dignity," Pyne suggests. The Forest Service has no plans to force out their 75-year-old mascot, who is also at the center of a merchandise industry. Still, Pyne dreams of a replacement.

Since 1947, Smokey has often been accompanied in posters by two cuddly cubs. In one image, they're all holding hands: "Please folks," Smokey says, holding his charges close, "be extra careful this year!" As Pyne sees it, "There's two of them, so they could educate about lighting fires and fighting fires," a modern understanding of fires, both good and bad. Smokey was created to speak to a generation shaped by fear of war. Those cubs could be a voice for a new generation learning to coexist with nature in an era of climate change. ◆

Slogans' Heroes

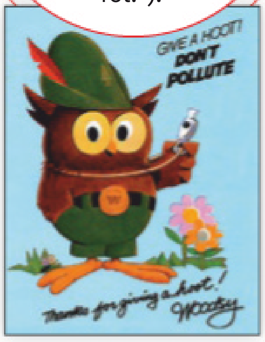
WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GETS INTO CARTOONING, YOU KNOW THERE'S TROUBLE

Research by **Sonya Maynard**

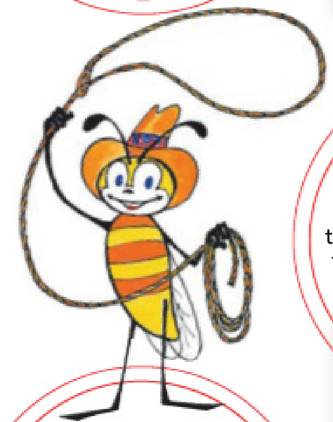


BERT
1952
During the Cold War, the Federal Civil Defense Administration created Bert the Turtle to show children how to respond if they witnessed an atomic flash.

WOODSY OWL
1971
Woodsy still spreads the Forest Service's message—now via social media and rap lyrics about composting ("It's the rubbish rot!").

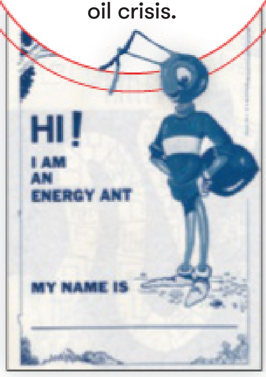

GIVE A HOOT! DON'T POLLUTE
Thanks for giving a hoot!
Woodsy

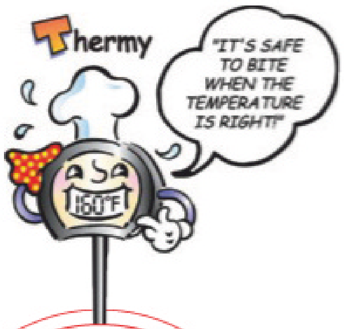
VINCE AND LARRY
1985
The Department of Transportation credits the crash test dummies with saving 85,000 lives. Seatbelt use rocketed up to 67 percent before they retired in 1999.



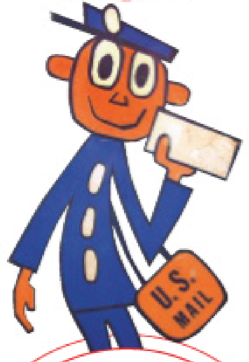
WELLBEE
1962
The CDC's cheerful bee (drawn by a former Felix the Cat animator) promoted vaccinations. His slogan—"Be wise. Immunize"—seems just as relevant today.

ENERGY ANT
1975
The Federal Energy Administration chose a tiny, "industrious creature" that "uses energy wisely" to lead a big conservation push during the oil crisis.


HI!
I AM AN ENERGY ANT
MY NAME IS

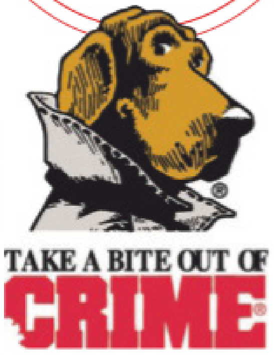

Thermy
"IT'S SAFE TO BITE WHEN THE TEMPERATURE IS RIGHT!"
160°F

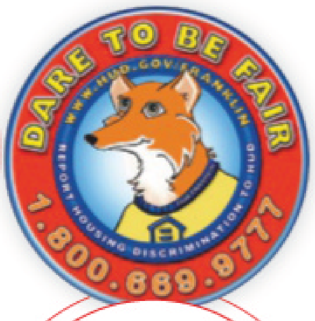
THERMY
2000
The USDA's mercurial Thermy keeps cooks out of the "danger zone" (temperatures at which bacteria multiply quickly) by reminding them of proper cooking temps.



MR. ZIP
1964
Introduced by the post office to explain the ZIP code system, Mr. ZIP popped up everywhere from Dick Tracy cartoons to Ethel Merman-voiced TV ads.

MCGRUFF
1980
Inspired by the rumpled TV detective Columbo, the crime dog still helps the National Crime Prevention Council teach people how to keep their neighborhoods safe.


TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME



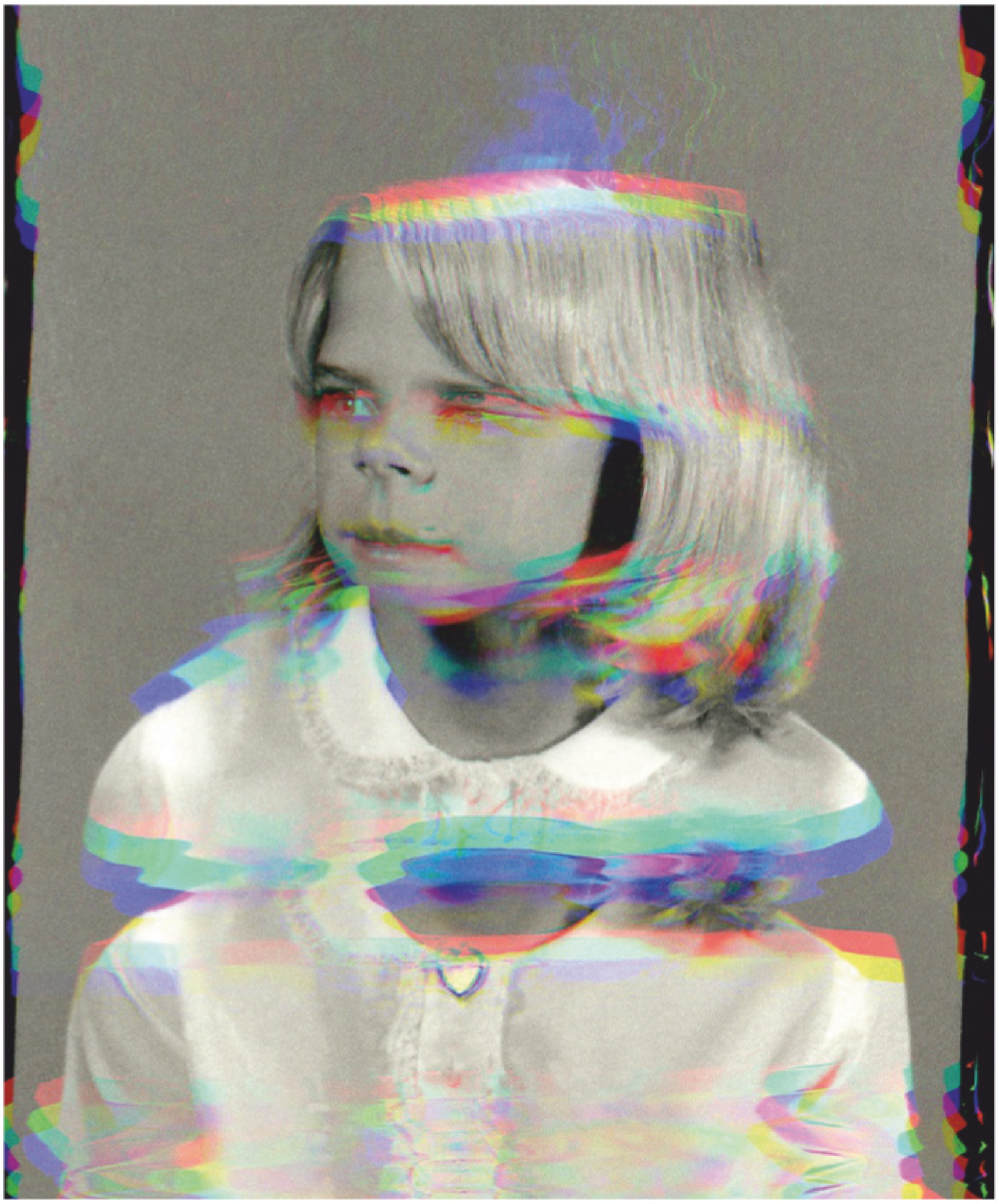
FRANKLIN
2007
The Department of Housing and Urban Development wants children to help outfox unscrupulous landlords. Franklin's first task: explaining the Fair Housing Act.

IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER: GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY; NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM; ALAMY; JOHN SAMPIETRO / RETRO REACTION; NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL; GETTY IMAGES; U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE; DEPT. OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

By
Amy Crawford

BEAUTIFUL BLUNDERS

Photographs that make the most of getting it wrong



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND COOPER COLE GALLERY INC.; @SARA CWYNAR

"Don't! Photography and the Art of Mistakes," opening July 20 at SFMOMA, celebrates overexposed, out-of-focus and otherwise flawed images as art.

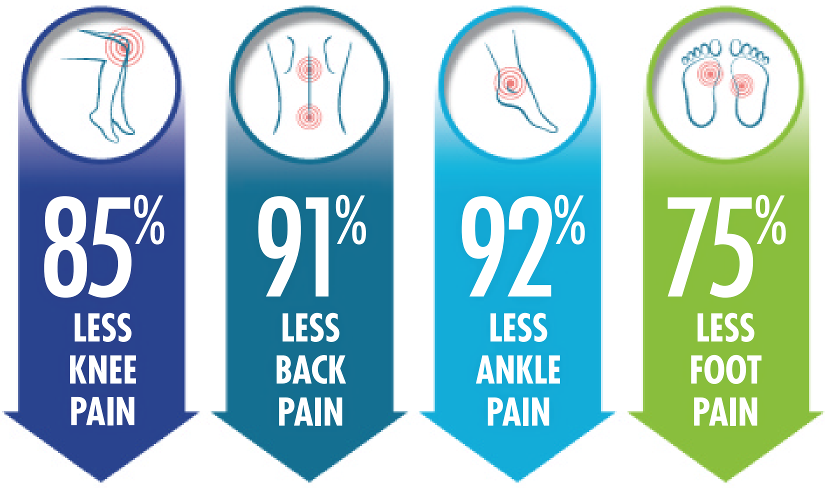
IN THE ERA before filters and Photoshop, photography handbooks showed idealized images that set the standards by which we still judge photos—and offered up tips on how to avoid pitfalls such as red eye. These classic tropes—the glamour shot, the perfect landscape—influence how we see the world, including what's normal or deviant, notes Clément Chéroux, curator of a show at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art that explores what happens when artists deliberately ignore the rules. To create her 2013 image *Girl from Contact Sheet (Darkroom Manuals)*, Sara Cwynar selected a portrait outtake published in a 1970s guide as an example of an imperfect image—the subject wasn't looking at the lens—and introduced more "errors" by jiggling the page on a flatbed scanner. "I wanted to pull apart something really familiar and think about how it was actually constructed," Cwynar explains. "To me, the most interesting thing about photography is when it doesn't work how it's supposed to." ◆

gravity defyer®
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION

LIVE LIFE WITHOUT PAIN

Plantar Fasciitis • Arthritis • Joint Pain • Heel Spurs • Back & Knee Pain

PATENTED VERSOSHOCK® SOLE
SHOCK ABSORPTION SYSTEM



85% LESS KNEE PAIN

91% LESS BACK PAIN

92% LESS ANKLE PAIN

75% LESS FOOT PAIN

*Results of a double-blind study conducted by Olive View UCLA Medical Center.

> “I’ve had lower back pain for years. Walking in these shoes was life changing for me. I feel like I’m walking on air.”
>
> – Bill F.

Enjoy the benefits of exercise
with proven pain relief.

- ✓ Ultimate Comfort
- ✓ Renewed Energy
- ✓ Maximum Protection
- ✓ Improve Posture

G-DEFY ION ***$150***

X-WIDE WIDTH AVAILABLE

Men Sizes 7.5-15 M/W/XW

- Black	TB9025MBB
- Red/Gray	TB9022MRG

Women Sizes 6-11 M/W/XW

- Black/Blue	TB9022FTL
- Gray/Teal	TB9022FGU

$30 OFF
YOUR ORDER
Promo Code MF9GLJ4
www.gravitydefyer.com
Expires November 30, 2019

Free Exchanges • Free Returns
100% Satisfaction Guaranteed
Call 1(800) 429-0039

Gravity Defyer Corp.
10643 Glenoaks Blvd. Pacoima, CA 91331

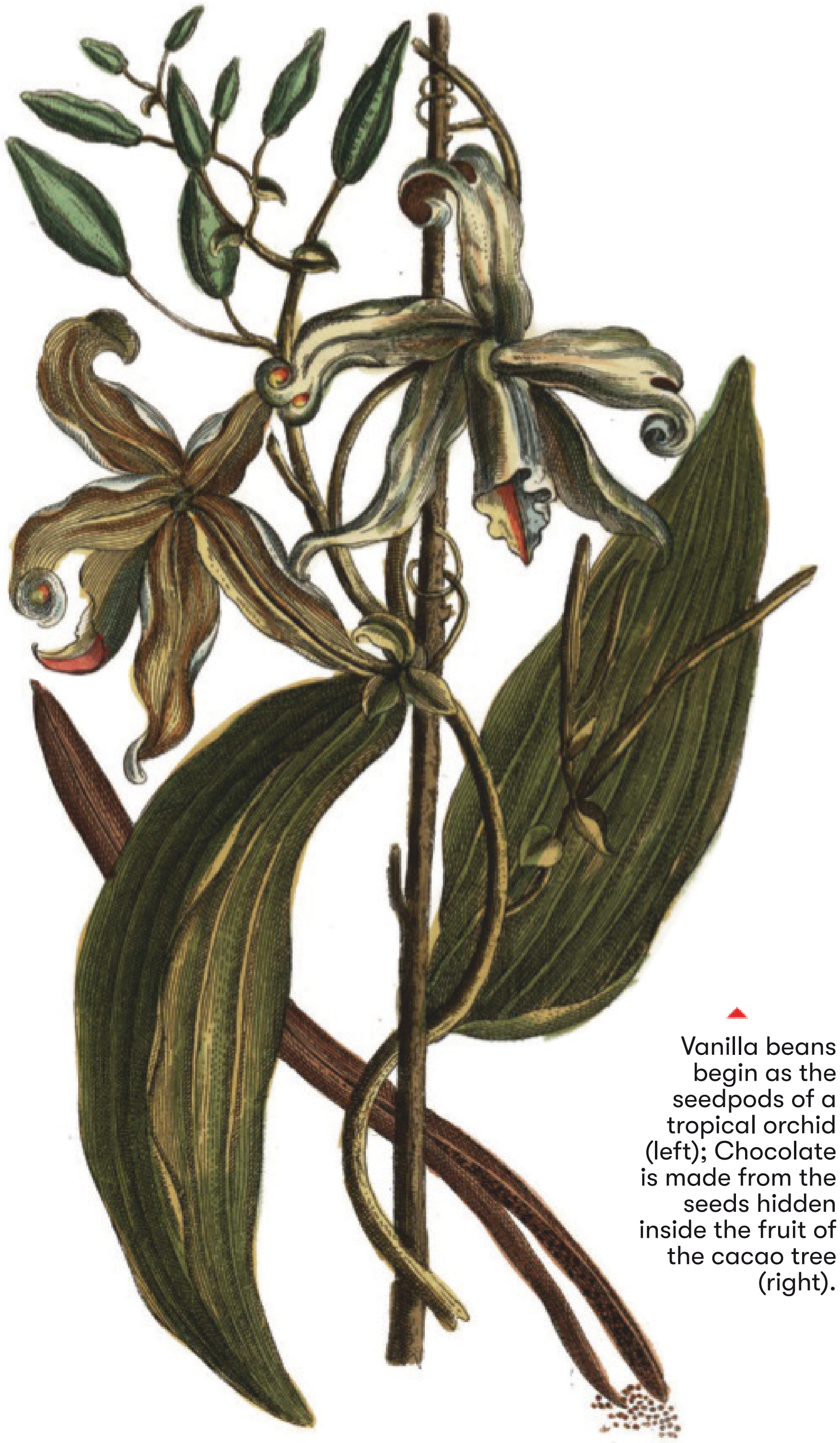
A+ Rating BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

VersoShock® U.S Patent #US8,555,526 B2. This product has not been evaluated by the FDA. Not intended to treat, cure or prevent any disease. $30 off applies to orders of $100 or more for a limited time. Cannot be combined with other offers. 9% CA sales tax applies to orders in California. Shoes must be returned within 30 days in like-new condition for full refund or exchange. Credit card authorization required. See website for complete details.

Sweet Science

Archaeologists are discovering that two of the world's most prized flavors have a much richer history than we thought

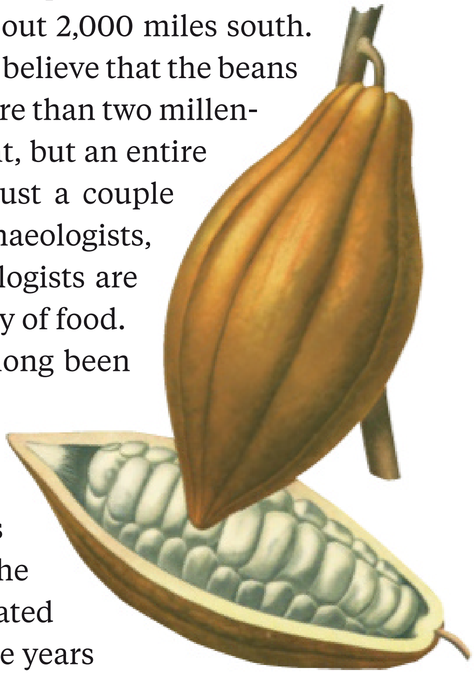
By
Franz Lidz



Vanilla beans begin as the seedpods of a tropical orchid (left); Chocolate is made from the seeds hidden inside the fruit of the cacao tree (right).

OF ALL THE GREAT DEBATES—Coke versus Pepsi, boxers versus briefs, shaken versus stirred—few have been more polarizing than chocolate versus vanilla. Those of us aligned with chocolate—the product of ground, roasted cacao beans—find it warm, comforting, ambrosial, and generally dismiss all things unchocolate as "vanilla," meaning bland and boring. Those who prefer vanilla, a climbing orchid that bears long podlike fruit, praise its aromatic sweetness and note that it enhances the flavor of chocolate, which unembellished would be dull and kind of flat—in short, vanilla.

The one aspect of the chocolate-and-vanilla divide that has seldom been disputed is the question of provenance. But over the last year two new studies have radically rejiggered the origin stories of both. On the chocolate front, the earliest chemical evidence of cacao use has been pushed about 1,400 years further into the past and about 2,000 miles south. For vanilla's part, researchers now believe that the beans were not only used by humans more than two millennia earlier than previously thought, but an entire ocean away. These findings are just a couple of the latest examples of how archaeologists, geneticists and cultural anthropologists are rewriting history through the study of food.



The earliest use of vanilla has long been attributed to the Totonac community in what is now the Mexican state of Veracruz. They gathered the fragrant seedpods from orchids that grew wild in the forests. Much later, they domesticated the vines, which can take up to five years to mature. Each flower must be pollinated the one day that it blooms or else the stem bears no fruit. In Mexico, *Vanilla planifolia* co-evolved with its pollinator, the melipona bee.

According to Totonac legend, the humble beginnings of the vanilla industry can be traced to 13th-century Papantla, known as "the city that perfumed the world." "The native peoples were very knowledgeable about the medicinal use of herbs and may well have ground the vanilla bean for lung and stomach disorders as well as used the liquid from green beans as a poultice for drawing out insect venom and infections from wounds," Patricia Rain explains in *Vanilla*, her cultural history of the spice.

➔

FLORILEGIUS / SSPL / GETTY IMAGES

Stauer
24
3 ATM WATER RESISTANT

Only $29!

You would be hard pressed to find a timepiece of this outstanding quality and precision at this price.

CLIENTS LOVE THE STAUER WATCH…

★★★★★

"The quality of their watches is equal to many that can go for ten times the price or more."

— Jeff from McKinney, TX

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU BLUE IN THE FACE

Time to take a stand against overpriced watches with the Stauer Urban Blue, **now only $29**.

You need a new watch…the one you are wearing was made when Nixon was in office, but extravagantly-priced watches that add zeros just because of a high falootin' name are an insult to your logic. Why shell out big money so some foreign company can sponsor another yacht race? It's time to put an end to such madness. It's absolutely possible to have the highest quality, precision classic timepiece without the high and mighty price tag. Case in point: The Stauer *Urban Blue.*

Packed with high-end watch performance and style, minus the high-end price tag. It's everything a high-end watch should be: Sturdy stainless steel and genuine leather construction. Precision timing that's accurate to four seconds a day—that's more precise than a 27-jewel automatic watch priced at over $6,000. And, good looking— with simple, clean lines and a striking metallic blue face.

"Blue watches are one of the growing style trends seen in the watch world in the past few years"—WATCHTIME®

Your great escape from the over-priced watch craze. At Stauer, we go directly to the source (cutting out the middleman), and engineer our own watch designs. This means we can offer a top quality timepiece that happens to only cost the same as two well-made cocktails at your favorite bar. So, while we're busy revolutionizing the watch industry to bring you more real value, you can take your own stand against overpriced watches with the *Urban Blue.*

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Wear the *Urban Blue for* 30 days. If you're not convinced that you achieved excellence for less, send it back for a refund of the item price. The *Urban Blue* is one of our fastest sellers. It takes six months to engineer this watch so don't wait. Take a stand against overpriced watches in impeccable style. **Limited to the first 1900 responders to this ad only.** Don't miss out...call today!

Stauer Urban Blue Watch ~~$199~~†

Offer Code Price **$29** + S&P **Save $170**

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: UBW465-02

You must use this insider offer code to get our special price.

Stauer®

14101 Southcross Drive W.,
Ste 155, Dept. UBW465-02
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337
www.stauer.com

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS
Rating of A+

CONSUMER AFFAIRS ACCREDITED

† Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

Precision movement • Stainless steel caseback and crown • Cotswold® mineral crystal • Date window • Water resistant to 3 ATM • Genuine leather band fits wrists 6 ¾"–8 ¾"

Stauer… *Afford the Extraordinary.*™

Cracking cacao beans into nibs (left) and drying vanilla pods (right) are steps in the long process of creating chocolate and vanilla. Below, a 3,600-year-old jug containing vanillin residue found in Israel.

The Aztecs, who subjugated the Totonacs in 1480, knew the plant as *tlilxochitl,* or “black pod” (a name which would be translated erroneously as “black flower,” leading to centuries of confusion over the primrose yellow petals). Tribute was exacted in the form of cured beans, an indispensable ingredient in the savory chocolate drink *cacahuatl*—also enlivened with chilies—which became the beverage of choice of Aztec nobility. In 1519, Montezuma II and the Spanish invader Hernán Cortés famously quaffed the cold, frothy brew at a feast in the capital Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City).

Some 75 years after Cortés returned to Europe with the pods, Hugh Morgan, the apothecary and pastry chef of Queen Elizabeth I, suggested that vanilla could be used as a flavoring all by itself. From then on, Her Majesty, a sugar freak with conspicuously rotted teeth, indulged in vanilla-infused sweetmeats. Thomas Jefferson discovered the flavor during a visit to France in the late 1700s. When he found none available on his return to Philadelphia, he wrote to the American chargé d’affaires in Paris, asking him to send him 50 pods wrapped in newspapers. “With the flourish of a pen and the help of a friend,” writes Rain, “he saw that vanilla had travelled nearly full circle back to the Americas.”

Now comes word that vanilla may have become a thing in the Old World before the new one. Researchers have pinpointed the earliest known example of the spice, in northern Israel. Soaked into three small jugs recovered at a site in Megiddo was a sweet surprise: two of the main chemicals in vanilla—4-hydroxybenzaldehyde and vanillin, a compound that forms tiny white crystals on the pod’s surface as the bean ferments. The expedition, organized by Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University, had the makings of a *Mummy* screenplay—an undisturbed 3,600-year-old Canaanite tomb; three intact skeletons; and a hoard of gold and silver jewelry. Call it the “Thrilla in Vanilla.”

The vessels sat beside the skeletons. “The tomb is probably associated with the royal family of Megiddo or its entourage,” Finkelstein says. “It is just several meters from the remains of the palace.” It’s possible that the vanilla was mixed with plant oil to create a perfume either to purify the burial chamber or to anoint the corpse before interment. “Vanilla has antimicrobial properties that could help to preserve a body before burial,” says University of California, Berkeley, archaeologist Melissa Cradic, who led the examination of the tomb. “Another possibility is that vanilla-scented perfumes were deposited in the burial as an expensive offering for the dead.”

Botanical history suggests that the vanillin found in jugs in modern-day Israel may have come from orchids native to Southeast Asia or East Africa. Finkelstein thinks the vanillin probably arrived in the Middle East through extensive Bronze Age trade routes. “This find is the tip of the iceberg,” Cradic says, “and represents only the beginning of our understanding of cultivation, exchange, and uses of vanilla in the ancient world.”

As if this new discovery weren’t enough to make a 6-year-old switch to strawberry, the birthday of chocolate has also been thrown into doubt by science. Based on a sample from a ceramic jar, it has been believed that the history of chocolate began with the Mokaya, sedentary villagers who occupied the Soconusco region of Mexico’s Pacific coast. Around 1900 B.C., the Mokayas began to consume *Theobroma cacao,* a plant that thrives in the upper reaches of the Amazon. There followed a succession of Mesoamerican societies—Olmec, Toltec, Maya, Aztec—that found ways to exploit the bean, which was variously used as a monetary unit, a measuring unit and a meal. It wasn’t until

ALAMY (2); COURTESY THE MEGIDDO EXPEDITION

My Crossword Puzzle
My Flower Garden
My Art Class
My Recipes
My Grandson's Smile
My Sunsets
BAUSCH + LOMB
PreserVision®
EYE VITAMIN AND MINERAL SUPPLEMENT
AREDS 2
PATENTED FORMULA
DOCTOR #1 BRAND RECOMMENDED
Based on The ONLY Clinically Proven Formula*

Because It's My Vision

PreserVision

If you've been diagnosed with Age-related Macular Degeneration, only PreserVision AREDS 2 contains the exact nutrient formula recommended by the National Eye Institute to help reduce the risk of moderate to advanced AMD progression.*,[1,2]

* These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Ask your doctor if PreserVision AREDS 2 is right for you.

[1] Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2 Research Group. AREDS2 randomized clinical trial. JAMA. 2013;309(19):2005-15.

[2] https://nei.nih.gov/areds AREDS2 is a registered trademark of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

SAVE $3.00

OFF ANY ONE (1) BAUSCH + LOMB PreserVision PRODUCT

MANUFACTURER'S COUPON | EXPIRES 6/30/2021

CONSUMER: Only one coupon redeemable per purchase on product specified at retail locations only. Any other use constitutes fraud. Void if copied, transferred, expired, prohibited by law or used to purchase products for resale. Limit 2 identical coupons per household per day. You pay any sales tax. **RETAILER:** We will reimburse you at face value plus 8¢ handling per coupon if used in compliance with the Bausch + Lomb Coupon Redemption Policy (CRP#1) incorporated herein by reference. Any other use constitutes fraud. Void if copied, transferred, expired, taxed, restricted, prohibited by law or used to purchase products for resale. Limit one coupon per purchase of specified product; limit 2 identical coupons per household per day. Cash value 1/20th of 1¢. Not redeemable for more than purchase price. Good only in USA. Mail to: Bausch + Lomb, Inmar Dept. 10119, 1 Fawcett Dr., Del Rio, TX 78840. ®/TM is a trademark of Bausch & Lomb Incorporated or its affiliates. © 2019 Bausch & Lomb Incorporated. PV2.0047.USA.19

Find it in the vitamin aisle

0310119-022145

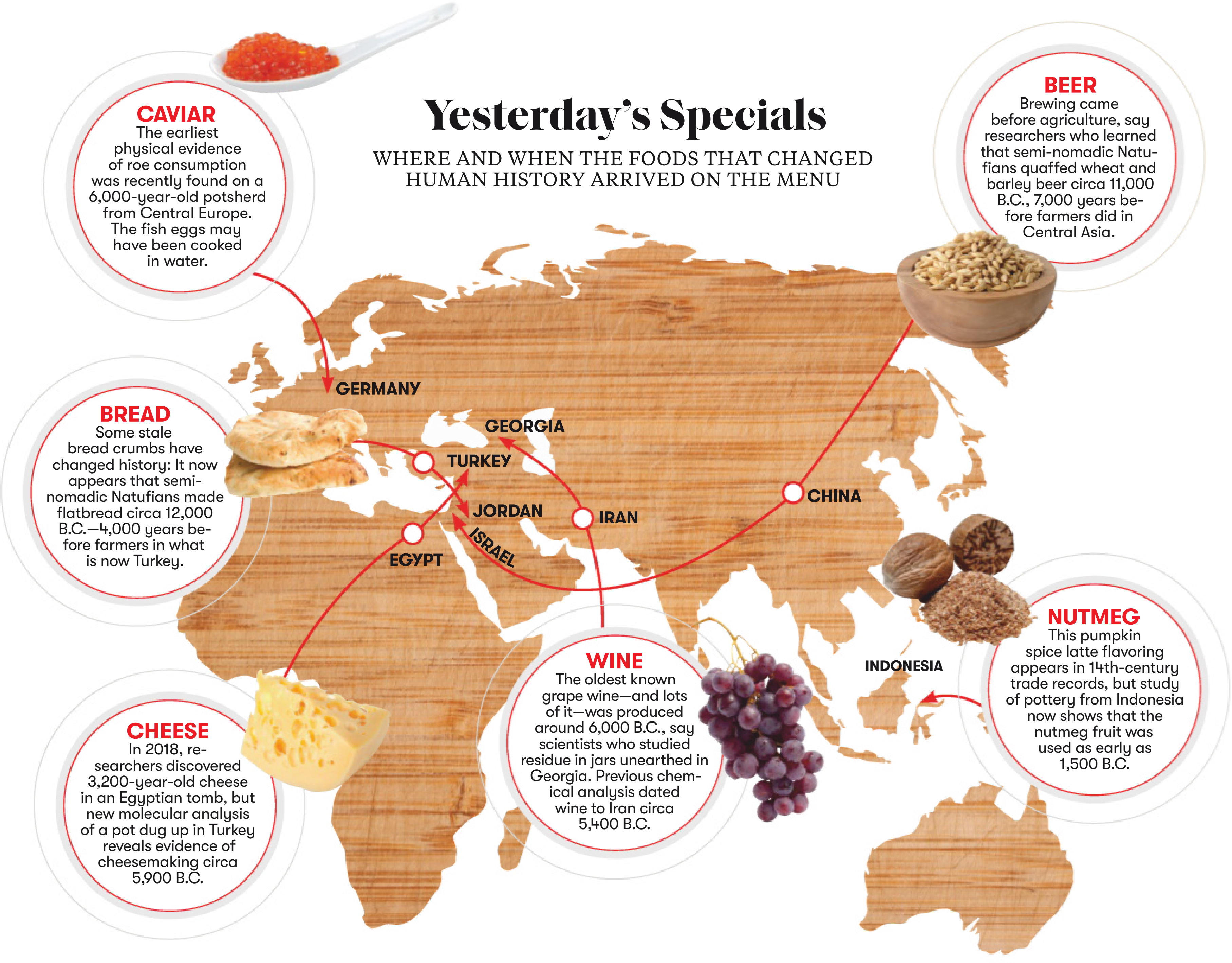
1847 that the English company J. S. Fry & Sons of Bristol produced the first solid chocolate bar offered to the general public.

Turns out that our love affair with chocolate predates the Mokaya. New research indicates that cacao was originally used in the humid forests of the upper Amazon basin, where the tree is at its most genetically diverse. Investigators looked at jars and shards of pottery from Santa Ana-La Florida, an archaeological site in Ecuador once inhabited by the Mayo-Chinchipe people, and detected signs of chocolate tippling from as long as 5,300 years ago.

A team of archaeologists and biologists from universities in North America, South America and Europe identified preserved starch grains from the genus *Theobroma,* which includes the species *T. cacao,* inside the artifacts, along with theobromine, a bitter alkaloid produced more abundantly by *T. cacao* than its wild relatives. The clincher: ancient DNA with sequences that matched those of modern cacao trees. Ethnographic and ethnobotanical descriptions of indigenous peoples in the Amazon basin have led archaeologist Michael Blake, a co-author of the paper, to suspect that the plants were used medicinally and ceremonially.

As you might expect in a study involving the contentious topic of chocolate, those conclusions are not universally accepted. Some scientists question whether the Mayo-Chinchipe prepared the seeds for eating—an elaborate process of fermentation, drying, roasting and grinding—or simply collected pods. Others have challenged the idea that the cacao plants made the passage from South America; another recent analysis pegged cacao cultivation to about 3,600 years ago in Central America.

If this new food scholarship has shown us anything, it's that nothing—not even chocolate and vanilla—is ever just black and white. ◆



Yesterday's Specials

WHERE AND WHEN THE FOODS THAT CHANGED HUMAN HISTORY ARRIVED ON THE MENU

CAVIAR
The earliest physical evidence of roe consumption was recently found on a 6,000-year-old potsherd from Central Europe. The fish eggs may have been cooked in water.

BEER
Brewing came before agriculture, say researchers who learned that semi-nomadic Natufians quaffed wheat and barley beer circa 11,000 B.C., 7,000 years before farmers did in Central Asia.

BREAD
Some stale bread crumbs have changed history: It now appears that semi-nomadic Natufians made flatbread circa 12,000 B.C.—4,000 years before farmers in what is now Turkey.

NUTMEG
This pumpkin spice latte flavoring appears in 14th-century trade records, but study of pottery from Indonesia now shows that the nutmeg fruit was used as early as 1,500 B.C.

WINE
The oldest known grape wine—and lots of it—was produced around 6,000 B.C., say scientists who studied residue in jars unearthed in Georgia. Previous chemical analysis dated wine to Iran circa 5,400 B.C.

CHEESE
In 2018, researchers discovered 3,200-year-old cheese in an Egyptian tomb, but new molecular analysis of a pot dug up in Turkey reveals evidence of cheesemaking circa 5,900 B.C.

ALAMY (6); SMAP: SHUTTERSTOCK

Research by **Mandy Tust**

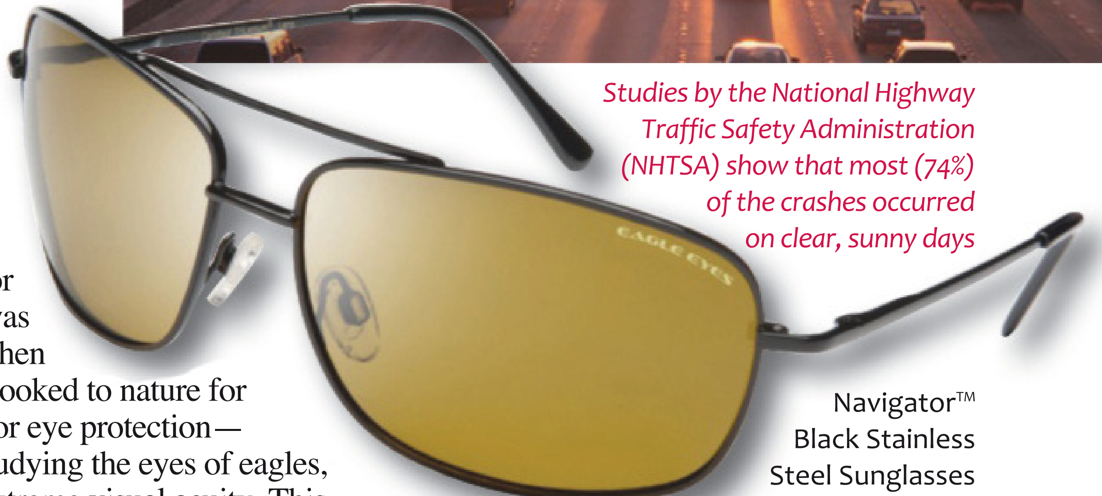
Urgent: Special Summer Driving Notice

Advertisement

To some, sunglasses are a fashion accessory…

But When Driving, These Sunglasses May Save Your Life!

Drivers' Alert: Driving can expose you to more dangerous glare than any sunny day at the beach can… do you know how to protect yourself?



Studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that most (74%) of the crashes occurred on clear, sunny days

Navigator™
Black Stainless
Steel Sunglasses

The sun rises and sets at peak travel periods, during the early morning and afternoon rush hours and many drivers find themselves temporarily blinded while driving directly into the glare of the sun. Deadly accidents are regularly caused by such blinding glare with danger arising from reflected light off another vehicle, the pavement, or even from waxed and oily windshields that can make matters worse. Early morning dew can exacerbate this situation. Yet, motorists struggle on despite being blinded by the sun's glare that can cause countless accidents every year.

Not all sunglasses are created equal. Protecting your eyes is serious business. With all the fancy fashion frames out there it can be easy to overlook what really matters—the lenses. So we did our research and looked to the very best in optic innovation and technology.

Sometimes it does take a rocket scientist. A NASA rocket scientist. Some ordinary sunglasses can obscure your vision by exposing your eyes to harmful UV rays, blue light, and reflective glare. They can also darken useful vision-enhancing light. But now, independent research conducted by scientists from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory has brought forth ground-breaking technology to help protect human eyesight from the harmful effects of solar radiation light. This superior lens technology was first discovered when NASA scientists looked to nature for a means to superior eye protection—specifically, by studying the eyes of eagles, known for their extreme visual acuity. This discovery resulted in what is now known as Eagle Eyes®.

Eagle Eyes®
Lens
simulation

Slip on a pair of Eagle Eyes® and everything instantly appears more vivid and sharp. You'll immediately notice that your eyes are more comfortable and relaxed and you'll feel no need to squint. The scientifically designed sunglasses are not just fashion accessories—they are necessary to protect your eyes from those harmful rays produced by the sun during peak driving times.

The Only Sunglass Technology Certified by the Space Foundation for UV and Blue-Light Eye Protection. Eagle Eyes® features the most advanced eye protection technology ever created. The TriLenium® Lens Technology offers triple-filter polarization to block 99.9% UVA and UVB—plus the added benefit of blue-light eye protection. Eagle Eyes® is the only optic technology that has earned official recognition from the Space Certification Program for this remarkable technology. Now, that's proven science-based protection.

CERTIFIED SPACE TECHNOLOGY spacefoundation.org

Certified EAGLE EYES® was developed from original NASA Optic technology and was recently inducted into the Space Foundation Technology Hall of Fame.

The finest optics: And buy one, get one FREE! Eagle Eyes® has the highest customer satisfaction of any item in our 20 year history. We are so excited for you to try the Eagle Eyes® breakthrough technology that we will give you a **second pair of Eagle Eyes® Navigator™ Sunglasses FREE—a $59.95 value!**

That's two pairs to protect your eyes with the best technology available for less than the price of one pair of traditional sunglasses. You get a pair of Navigators with stainless steel black frames and the other with stainless steel gold, plus one hard zipper case and one micro-fiber drawstring cleaning pouch are included. Keep one pair in your pocket and one in your car.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. If you are not astounded with the Eagle Eyes® technology, enjoying clearer, sharper and more glare-free vision, simply return one pair within 30 days for a full refund of the purchase price. The other pair is yours to keep. No one else has such confidence in their optic technology. Don't leave your eyes in the hands of fashion designers, entrust them to the best scientific minds on earth. Wear your Eagle Eyes® **Navigators** with absolute confidence, knowing your eyes are protected with technology that was born in space for the human race.

Receive the Navigator™ Gold Sunglasses (*a $59.95 value*) **FREE! just for trying the Navigator™ Black**

Navigator™ Gold Stainless Steel Sunglasses

Fit-ons available for
$39 +S&H
Black or Tortoise-Shell design

Two Pairs of Eagle Eyes® Navigator™ Sunglasses ~~$119.90~~†

Offer Code Price **$49** + S&P **Save $70.90**

Offer includes one pair each Navigator™ Black and Navigator™ Gold Sunglasses

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: EEN870-06
You must use this insider offer code to get our special price.

Stauer®
14101 Southcross Drive W.,
Ste 155, Dept. EEN870-06
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337
www.stauer.com

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS
Rating of A+

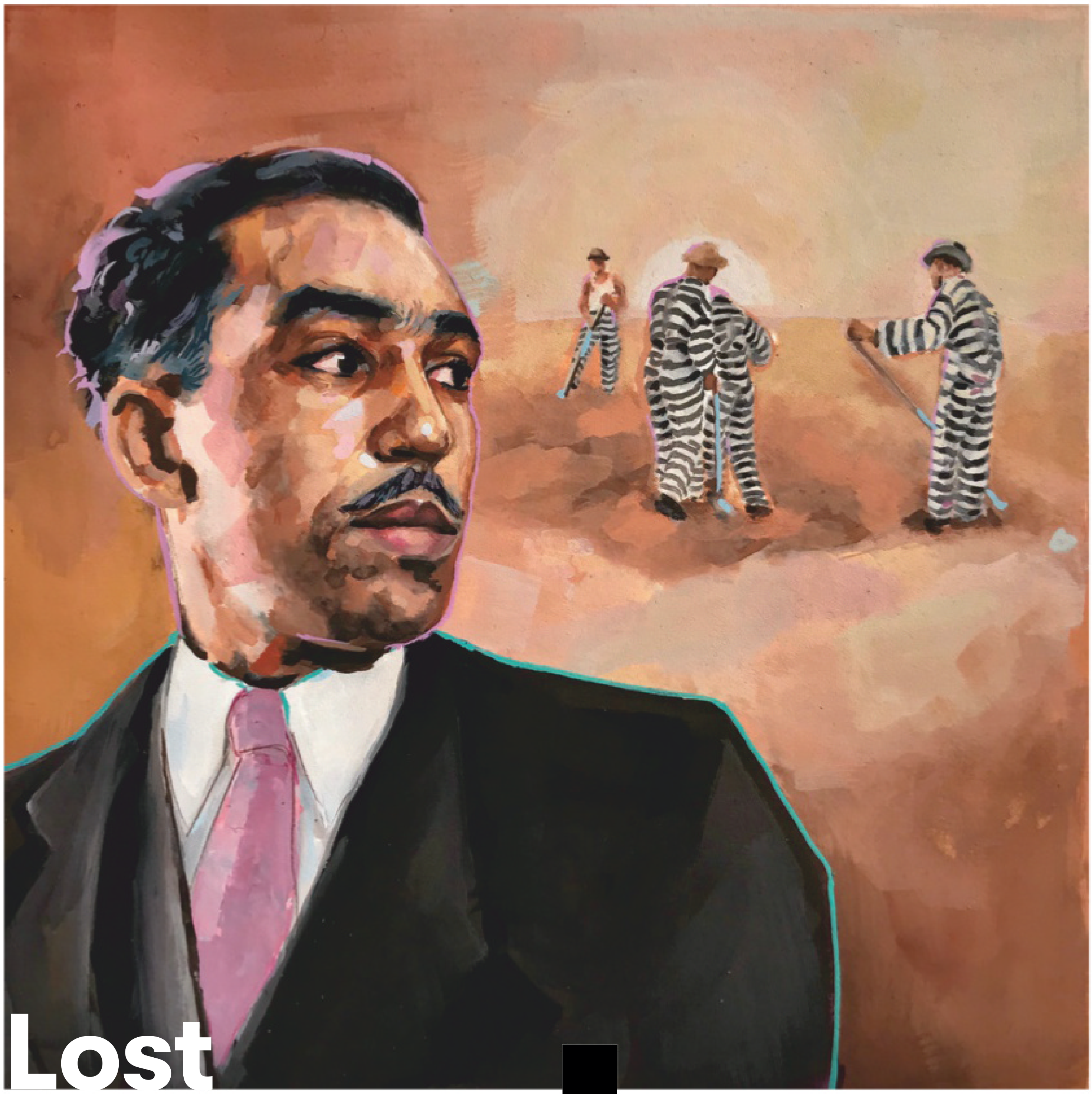
† Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices™

LITERATURE

By
Steven Hoelscher

Illustration by
Jurell Cayetano



A Lost Work by Langston Hughes

In 1933, the Harlem Renaissance star wrote a powerful essay about race. It has never been published in English—until now

IT'S NOT EVERY DAY that you come across an extraordinary unknown work by one of the nation's greatest writers. But buried in an unrelated archive I recently discovered a searing essay condemning racism in America by Langston Hughes—the moving account, published in its original form here for the first time, of an escaped prisoner he met while traveling with Zora Neale Hurston.

In the summer of 1927, Hughes lit out for the American South to learn more about the region that loomed large in his literary imagination. After giving a poetry reading at Fisk University in Nashville, Hughes journeyed by train through Louisiana and Mississippi before disembarking in Mobile, Alabama. There, to his surprise, he ran into Hurston, his friend and fellow author.

THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE, MADE A REALITY BY USPS.

Every day, visionaries are creating new ways for us to experience tomorrow. But they need people who know how to deliver it. The USPS delivers more online purchases to homes than anyone else in the country.

We deliver for you.® See how at USPS.com/visionary

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

PRIORITY:YOU

PRIORITY MAIL
PS000110000
PRIORITY MAIL
TRACKED
INSURED

© 2018 United States Postal Service. All Rights Reserved. The Eagle Logo is among the many trademarks of the U.S. Postal Service®. Please recycle packaging materials whenever possible.

Described by Yuval Taylor in his new book *Zora and Langston* as “one of the more fortuitous meetings in American literary history,” the encounter brought together two leading lights of the Harlem Renaissance. On the spot, the pair decided to drive back to New York City together in Hurston’s small Nash coupe.

The terrain along the back roads of the rural South was new to Hughes, who grew up in the Midwest; by contrast, Hurston’s Southern roots and training as a folklorist made her a knowledgeable guide. In his journal Hughes described the black people they met in their travels: educators, sharecropping families, blues singers and conjurers. Hughes also mentioned the chain gang prisoners forced to build the roads they traveled on.

Three years later, Hughes gave the poor, young and mostly black men of the chain gangs a voice in his satirical poem “Road Workers”—but we now know that the images of these men in gray-and-black-striped uniforms continued to linger in the mind of the writer. In this newly discovered manuscript, Hughes revisited the route he traveled with Hurston, telling the story of their encounter with one young man picked up for fighting and sentenced to hard labor on the chain gang.

I first stumbled upon this Hughes essay in the papers of John L. Spivak, a white investigative journalist in the 1920s and 1930s, at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. Not even Hughes’ authoritative biographer Arnold Rampersad could identify the manuscript. Eventually, I learned that Hughes had written it as an introduction to a novel Spivak published in 1932, *Georgia Nigger*. The book was a blistering exposé of the atrocious conditions that African-Americans suffered on chain gangs, and Spivak gave it a deliberately provocative title to reflect the brutality he saw. Scholars today consider the forced labor system a form of slavery by another name. On the final page of the manuscript (not reproduced here), Hughes wrote that by “blazing the way to truth,” Spivak had written a volume “of great importance to the Negro peoples.”

Hughes titled these three typewritten pages “Foreword From Life.” And in them he also laid bare his fears of driving through Jim Crow America. “We knew that it was dangerous for Northern Negroes to appear too interested in the affairs of the rural South,” he wrote. (Hurston packed a chrome-plated pistol for protection during their road trip.)

But a question remained: Why wasn’t Hughes’ essay included in any copy of Spivak’s book I had ever seen? Buried in Spivak’s papers, I found the answer. Hughes’ essay was written a year after the book was published, commissioned to serve as the foreword of the 1933 Soviet edition and published only in Russian.

In early 1933, Hughes was living in Moscow, where he was heralded as a “revolutionary writer.” He had originally traveled there a year earlier along with 21 other influential African-Americans to participate in a film about American racism. The film had been a bust (no one could agree on the script), but escaping white supremacy in the United States—at least temporarily—was immensely appealing. The Soviet Union, at that time, promoted an ideal of racial equality that Hughes longed for. He also found that he could earn a living entirely from his writing.

For this Russian audience, Hughes reflected on a topic as relevant today as it was in 1933: the injustice of black incarceration. And he captured the story of a man that—like the stories of so many other young black men—would otherwise be lost. We may even know his name: Hughes’ journal mentions one Ed Pinkney, a young escapee whom Hughes and Hurston met near Savannah. We don’t know what happened to him after their interaction. But by telling his story, Hughes forces us to wonder.

FOREWORD FROM LIFE

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

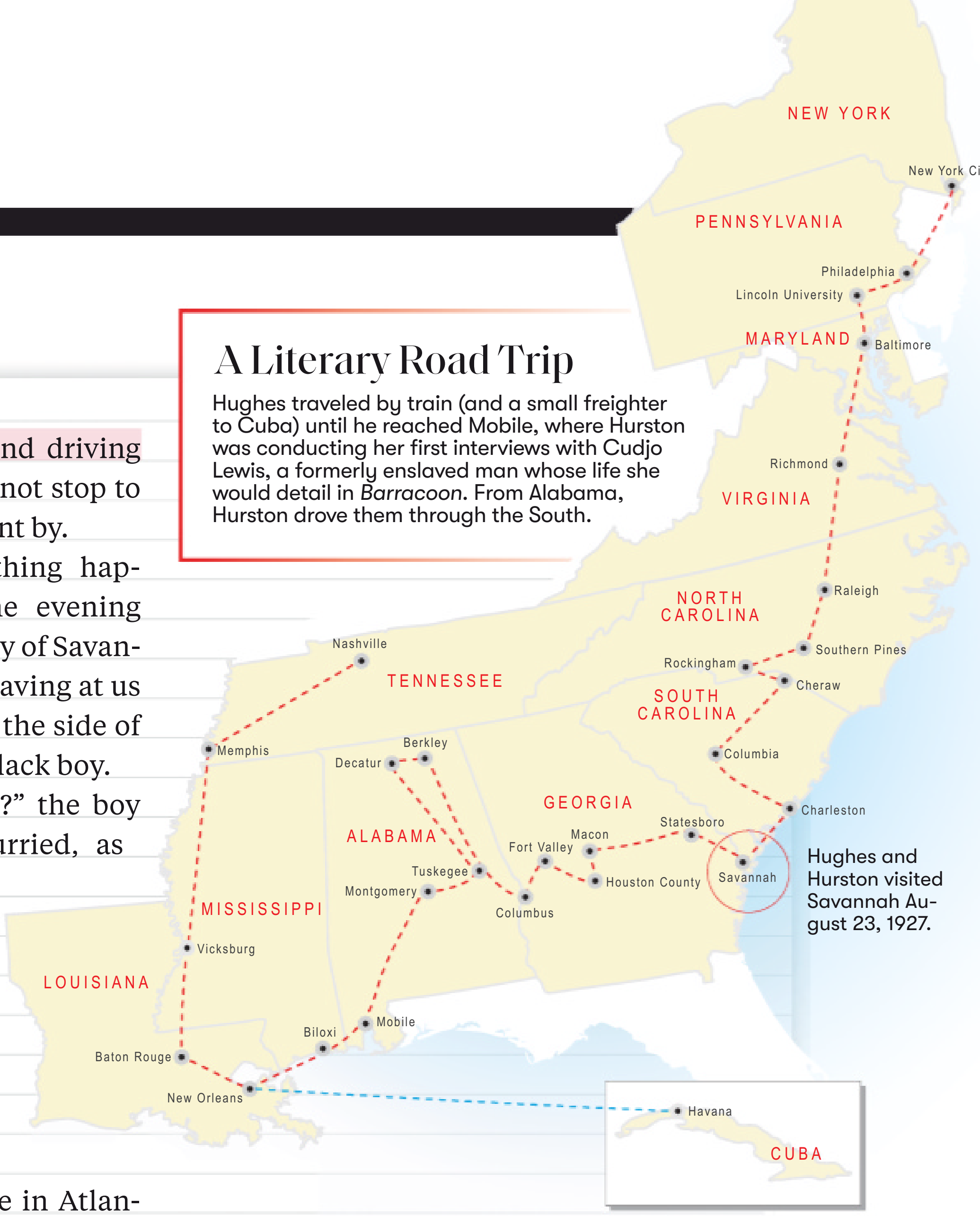
I HAD ONCE A SHORT but memorable experience with a fugitive from a chain gang in this very same Georgia of which [John L.] Spivak writes. I had been lecturing on my poetry at some of the Negro universities of the South and, with a friend, I was driving North again in a small automobile. All day since sunrise we had been bumping over the hard red clay roads characteristic of the backward sections of the South. We had passed two chain gangs that day,[1] one in the morning grading a country road, and the other about noon, a group of Negroes in gray and black stripped [sic] suits, bending and rising under the hot sun, digging a drainage ditch at the side of the highway.[2] We wanted to stop and talk to the men, but we were afraid. The white guards on horseback glared at us as we slowed down our machine, so we went on. On our automobile there was a New York license, and we knew it was dangerous for Northern Negroes to appear too interested in the affairs of the rural South. Even peaceable Negro salesmen had been beaten and mobbed by whites who objected to seeing a neatly dressed colored per-

[1] This sight was common. By 1930 in Georgia alone, more than 8,000 prisoners, mostly black men, toiled on chain gangs in 116 counties. The punishment was used in Georgia from the 1860s through the 1940s.

[2] Adopting the voice of a chain gang laborer in the poem “Road Workers,” published in the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1930, Hughes wrote, “Sure, / A road helps all of us! / White folks ride — / And I get to see ’em ride.”

A Literary Road Trip

Hughes traveled by train (and a small freighter to Cuba) until he reached Mobile, where Hurston was conducting her first interviews with Cudjo Lewis, a formerly enslaved man whose life she would detail in *Barracoon*. From Alabama, Hurston drove them through the South.


NEW YORK
New York City
PENNSYLVANIA
Philadelphia
Lincoln University
MARYLAND
Baltimore
Richmond
VIRGINIA
Raleigh
NORTH CAROLINA
Nashville
TENNESSEE
Southern Pines
Rockingham
Cheraw
SOUTH CAROLINA
Memphis
Berkley
Decatur
Columbia
GEORGIA
Charleston
Statesboro
Macon
ALABAMA
Fort Valley
Tuskegee
Houston County
Savannah
Montgomery
Columbus
MISSISSIPPI
Vicksburg
LOUISIANA
Mobile
Biloxi
Baton Rouge
New Orleans
Havana
CUBA

Hughes and Hurston visited Savannah August 23, 1927.

son speaking decent English and driving his own automobile.[3] So we did not stop to talk to the chain gangs as we went by.

But that night a strange thing happened. After sundown, in the evening dusk, as we were nearing the city of Savannah, we noticed a dark figure waving at us frantically from the swamps at the side of the road. We saw that it was a black boy.

"Can I go with you to town?" the boy stuttered. His words were hurried, as though he were frightened, and his eyes glanced nervously up and down the road.

"Get in," I said. He sat between us on the single seat.

"Do you live in Savannah?" we asked.

"No, sir," the boy said. "I live in Atlanta." We noticed that he put his head down nervously when other automobiles passed ours, and seemed afraid.

"And where have you been?" we asked apprehensively.

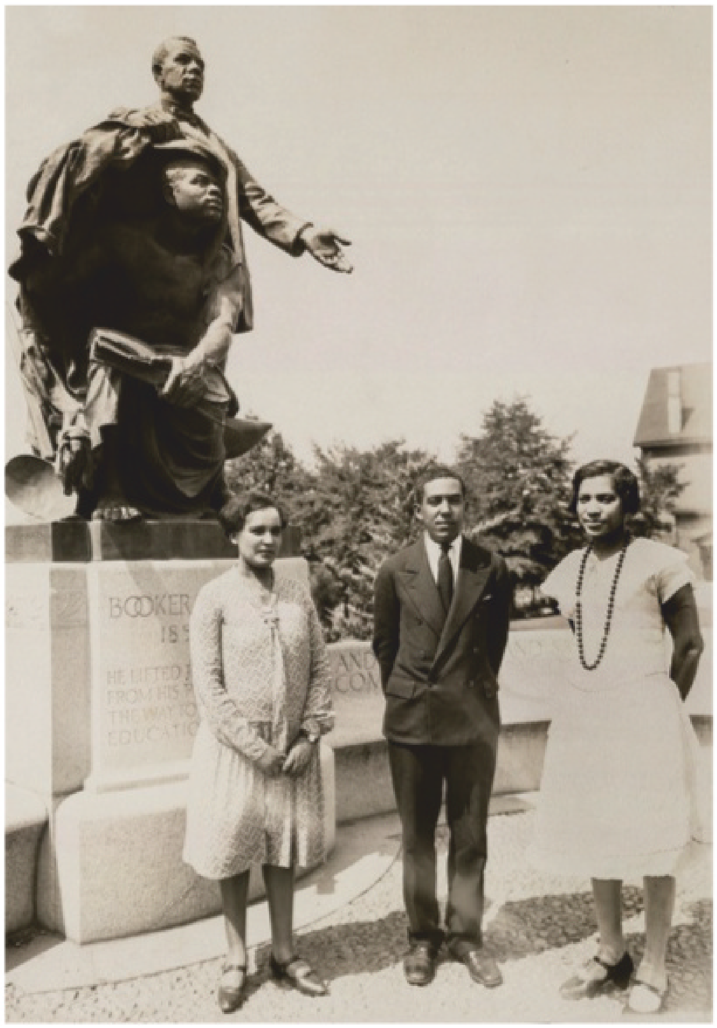
"On the chain gang," he said simply.

We were startled. "They let you go today?"

"No, sir. I ran away.[4] That's why I was afraid to walk in the town. I saw you-all was colored and I waved to you. I thought maybe you would help me."

Gradually, before the lights of Savannah came in sight, in answer to our many questions, he told us his story. Picked up for fighting, prison, the chain gang. But not a bad chain gang, he said. They didn't beat you much in this one.[5] Only once the guard had knocked two teeth out. That was all. But he couldn't stand it any longer. He wanted to see his wife in Atlanta. He had been married only two weeks when they sent him away, and she needed him. He needed her. So he had made it to the swamp. A colored preacher gave him clothes. Now, for two days, he hadn't eaten, only running. He had to get to Atlanta.

"But aren't you afraid," [w]e asked, "they might arrest you in Atlanta, and send you back to the same gang for ➔



Hughes and Hurston (right) visited Tuskegee University on their trip. They were photographed there with writer Jessie Fauset in front of a statue of Booker T. Washington titled "Lifting the Veil of Ignorance."

[3] The NAACP collected reports of violence against blacks in this era, including a similar incident in Mississippi in 1925. Dr. Charles Smith and Myrtle Wilson were dragged from a car, beaten and shot. The only cause recorded: "jealousy among local whites of the doctor's new car and new home."

[4] In his journal, Hughes wrote about meeting an escaped convict named Ed Pinkney near Savannah. Hughes noted that Pinkney was 15 years old when he was sentenced to the chain gang for striking his wife.

[5] Guard-on-convict violence was pervasive on Jim Crow-era chain gangs. Inmates begged for transfers to less violent camps but requests were rarely granted. "I remembered the many, many such letters of abuse and torture from 'those who owed Georgia a debt,'" Spivak wrote.

THE LANGSTON HUGHES ESTATE; TEXT: REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF HAROLD OBER ASSOCIATES. COPYRIGHT 1933 BY THE LANGSTON HUGHES ESTATE

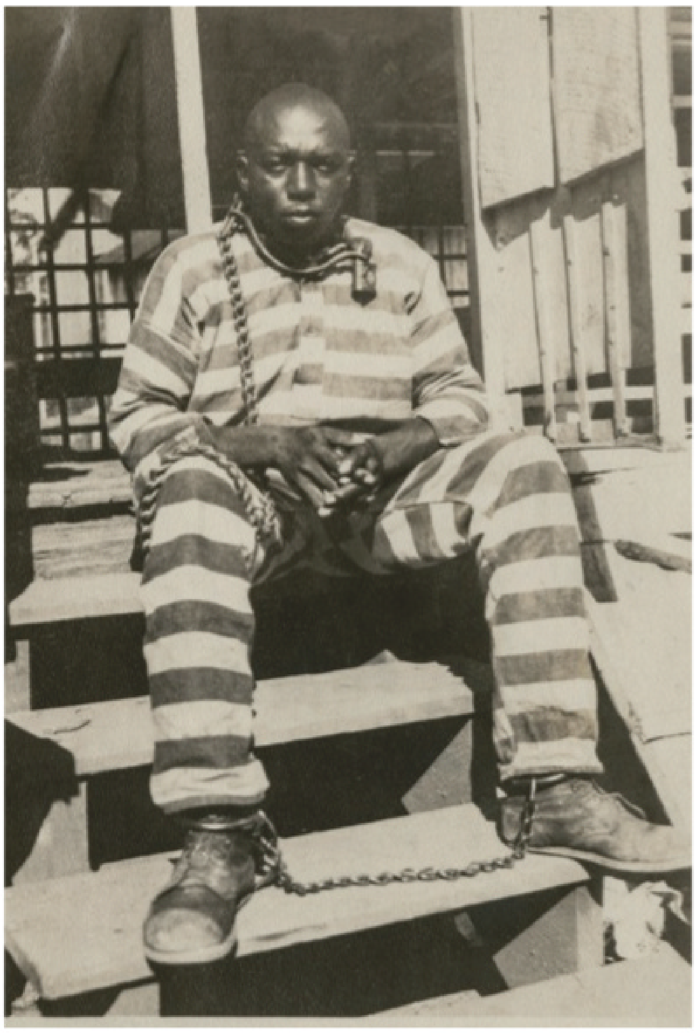
running away? Atlanta is still in the state of Georgia. Come up North with us," we pleaded, "to New York where there are no chain gangs, and Negroes are not treated so badly. Then you'll be safe."

He thought a while. When we assured him that he could travel with us, that we would hide him in the back of the car where the baggage was, and that he could work in the North and send for his wife, he agreed slowly to come.

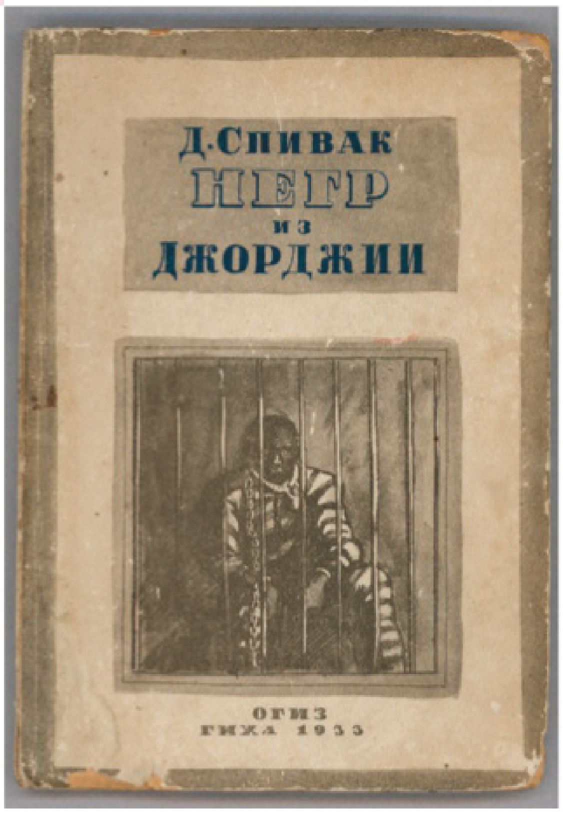
"But ain't it cold up there?" he said.

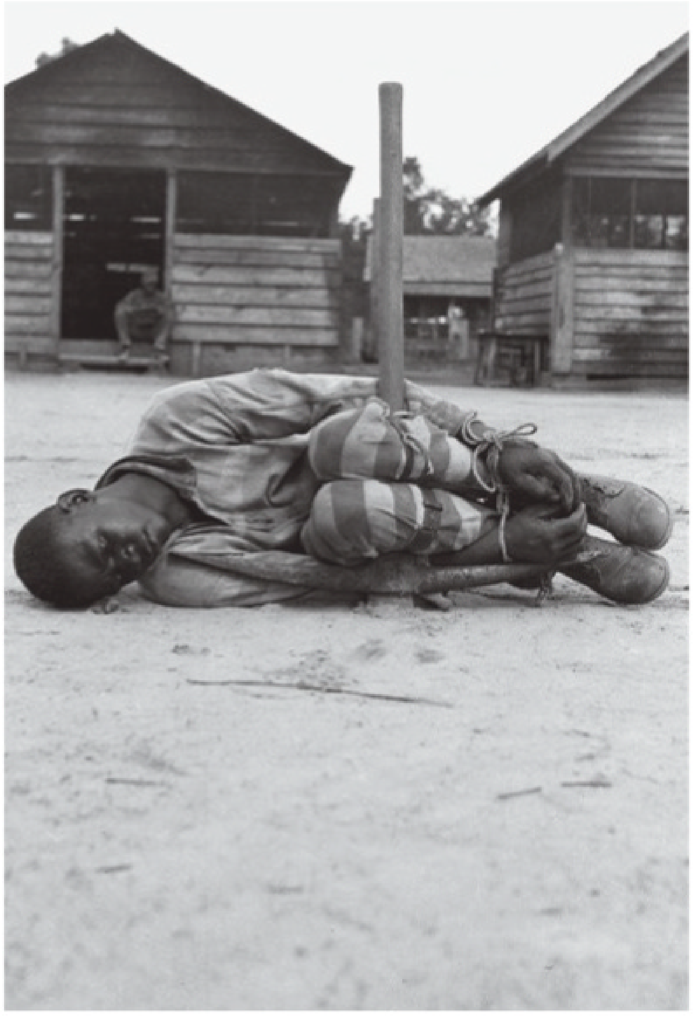
"Yes," we answered.

In Savannah, we found a place for him to sleep and gave him half a dollar for food. "We will come for you at dawn," we said. But when, in the morning we passed the house where he had stayed, we were told that he had already gone before daybreak. We did not see him again. Perhaps the desire to go home had been greater than the wish to go North to freedom. Or perhaps he had been afraid to travel with us by daylight. Or suspicious of our offer. Or maybe [. . .][6] ◆



7





Spivak photographed the torture some inmates endured in Georgia in 1931. One man in Muscogee County (top right) was chained in a neck iron for two months. A boy in Seminole County (right) was tied, immobilized, to a post because he "sassed" a guard.

[6] In the English manuscript, the end of Hughes' story about the convict trails off with an incomplete thought—"Or maybe"—but the Russian translation continues: "Or maybe he got scared of the cold? But most importantly, his wife was nearby!"

[7] For publication in Russia, the title of Spivak's book was translated as "Negr iz Dzhordzhii." Russian doesn't have an equivalent of the n-word used in the English title. "Negr" is a standard, neutral term that describes someone of African descent.

HESBURGH LIBRARIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME; JOHN L. SPIVAK PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION / HARRY RANSOM CENTER, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN (2)

Pearl Seas Cruises®

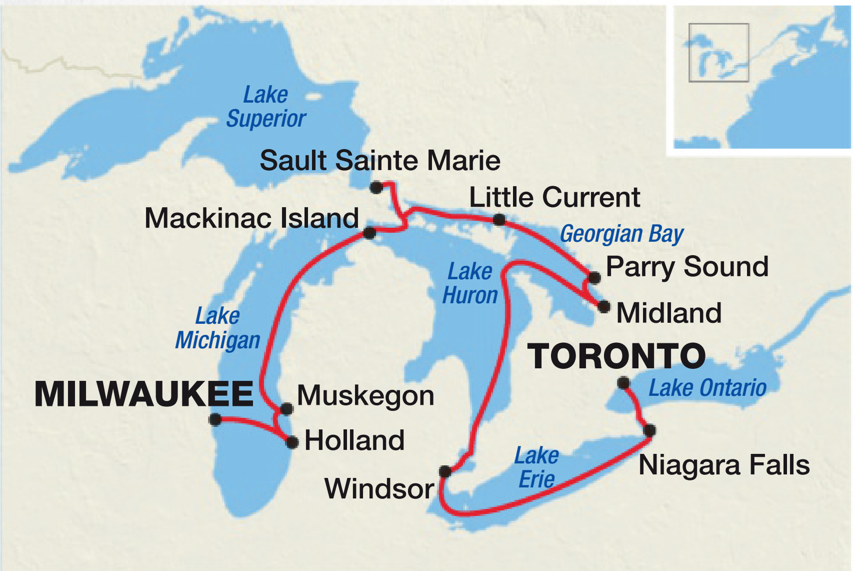
Call for a Free Cruise Guide!

Great Lakes Cruises

EXPERIENCE IT WITH THE BEST

Explore charming towns and quaint villages as you delight your senses in the natural splendor that surrounds you. On this captivating 7 to 11-night journey, travel in the sophisticated comfort of our modern fleet and experience the most personalized service in small ship cruising.

Explore Well™


Lake Superior
Sault Sainte Marie
Little Current
Mackinac Island
Georgian Bay
Parry Sound
Lake Huron
Midland
Lake Michigan
TORONTO
Lake Ontario
MILWAUKEE
Muskegon
Holland
Lake Erie
Niagara Falls
Windsor

Call for a
FREE Cruise Guide

1-888-669-5812

PearlSeasCruises.com

NATIONAL TREASURE

SONY
STEREO
MADE IN JAPAN
maxell

> “IT’S NICE TO HEAR PAVAROTTI INSTEAD OF CAR HORNS,” ANDY WARHOL SAID.

At the apex of the Walkman craze, 1987 to ’97, the number of people who reported that they walked for exercise rose by 30 percent.

By
Clive Thompson

Photograph by
ioulex

You Tunes

Singing the praises of the Walkman, which launched the revolution in self-centered music 40 years ago

IN 1979, WHEN SONY introduced the Walkman—a 14-ounce cassette player, blue and silver with buttons that made a satisfying chunk when pushed—even the engineers inside Sony weren't impressed. It wasn't particularly innovative; cassette players already existed, and so did headphones. Plus, the Walkman could only play back—it couldn't record. Who was going to want a device like that?

Millions of consumers, it turns out. The $200 device—over $700 in today's money, as pricey as a smartphone—instantly became a hit, selling out its initial run of 30,000 in Japan. When it went on sale at Bloomingdale's in New York City, the waiting list stretched to two months. (An early version of the Walkman now resides in the collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.)

What was the allure? The sudden portability of gorgeous, head-filling sound. Previously, if you wanted to hear hi-fi music on headphones, you were stuck tethered to a home stereo. The Walkman unmoored you. Now you could walk down the street, and the music altered the very experience of looking at the world. Everything—the pulsing of traffic, the drift of snowflakes, passers wandering by on the sidewalk—seemed laden with new meaning.

"Life became a film," as Andreas Pavel, an inventor who'd patented his own prototype of an ur-Walkman, years before Sony, once noted. "It emotionalized your life. It actually put magic into your life." Or as one 16-year-old Walkman wearer described it in historian Heike Weber's account, "I have my own world, somehow. I see it differently and hear it differently and feel stronger." People used the Walkman to help manage their moods and calm stress; dentists would plop Walkman headphones on a patient before drilling. Andy Warhol tuned out the din of Manhattan: "It's nice to hear Pavarotti instead of car horns," he said.

The device also became a fashion statement, a badge of modernity: Sony's ads portrayed a roller-skating couple joyfully sailing along, Walkman held aloft. For the first time, sporting a piece of cutting-edge hardware was fashionable, not dorky.

"It was the first mass mobile device," notes Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow, author of *Personal Stereo*. "It changed how people inhabited public space in a pretty profound way." It paved the way for acceptance of the mobile phone, today's truly omnipresent portable tech.

But, much like the mobile phone, the Walkman tore a rent in the social fabric. To use one was to intentionally seal the public out. "It's the privatizing of space," Michael Bull, a University of Sussex professor, who studied Walkman users in the '90s, told me. "Personal stereos are visual 'do not disturb' signs," he wrote in his book *Sounding Out the City*. Earlier transistor radios, which had single earpieces, didn't have that effect. "The experience of listening to your Walkman is intensely insular," as the music critic Vince Jackson wrote in the British magazine *Touch*. "It signals a desire to cut yourself off from the rest of the world at the touch of a button. You close your eyes and you could be anywhere." Bull, for his part, said listening to a Walkman was healthy, a kind of assertion of autonomy.

Plenty disagreed. To them, it seemed fantastically rude: “Our marriage or your Sony,” as graphic designer James Miho’s wife warned him in 1980, after, as the *New York Times* reported, he tuned her out for reggae. The philosopher Allan Bloom, in *The Closing of the American Mind*, inveighed against the specter of a boy doing his homework with a Walkman on, “a pubescent child whose body throbs with orgasmic rhythms”—a generation of kids cut off from great literature: “As long as they have the Walkman on, they cannot hear what the great tradition has to say.”

Soon enough the Walkman was a symbol of navel-gazing self-absorption. Critics mocked narcissistic yuppies for listening to self-help books on their commutes to upscale jobs, and derided GenX slackers for lethargically dropping out, sitting in an emo trance. “A technology for a generation with nothing left to say,” *Der Spiegel* reported.

“You couldn’t win, no matter how you used it,” Tuhus-Dubrow laughs.

Interestingly, Sony itself was worried the machine encouraged antisocial behavior. Sony’s boss, Akio Morita, ordered that the first Walkman include a second headset jack—so two could listen at once. But it turns out nobody wanted it. “People wanted to listen by themselves,” Tuhus-Dubrow notes.

Yet people did indeed create a vibrant social culture around the Walkman. They shared earbuds; they made mixtapes for friends or dates. Indeed, making mixtapes—stitching together songs from one’s home stereo, to make a new compilation—became a distinctly modern activity. The message was not in any one song but in their combination, their sequencing. “Mixtapes mark the moment of consumer culture in which listeners attained control over what they heard, in what order and at what cost,” as the critic Matias Viegener wrote. Mixtapes also helped fuel the panic over copyright, with the music industry launching a campaign claiming that “Home Taping Is Killing Music.”

It didn’t kill music, of course. But gave us a glimpse of our coming 21st-century world—where we live surrounded by media, holding a device in our hands at all times. ◆

In 1969, the *New York Times* described Joe Cocker’s air guitar as “unusual gesturing.”

FOTOS INTERNATIONL / GETTY IMAGES

Origins

Air Apparent

AN ELECTRIFYING HISTORY OF THE WORLD’S MOST POPULAR INVISIBLE INSTRUMENT

By April White

JOE COCKER COULD FEEL THE MUSIC channeling through his body as he began his final number on the Woodstock stage. With one hand, the singer mimed the song’s opening piano notes, and then, as the drums kicked in, Cocker lifted his left arm and swung his right in front of his body in perfect time with the dramatic first chords of his hit “With a Little Help From My Friends.” The term wouldn’t be popularized until the 1980s, but there, in front of hundreds of thousands of people, Joe Cocker was playing air guitar.

You could start the history of the invisible instrument at that formative moment in 1969, says Byrd McDaniel, an ethnomusicologist at Northeastern University. But McDaniel, who studies “air playing,” has found the same impulse to embody music throughout history. In the 1860s, it was described as a symptom of mental illness, but by the 1930s, it was a mere curiosity, a side effect of the phonograph; some listeners, the Minneapolis Phonographic Society reported, had “taken to ‘shadow conducting.’ ”

Since then, air playing has become a socially acceptable alternative for those who don’t dance, says ethnomusicologist Sydney Hutchinson of Syracuse University. The practice crosses cultures; in the Dominican Republic, people pantomime the air güira, a metal percussion instrument. But only air guitar has also become an international spectator sport.

One of the first known air guitar contests took place at Florida State University in November 1978. Hundreds of students turned out to watch “Mark Stagger and the Rolling Bones” take first prize: 25 vinyl records. This August, top air guitarists from nearly a dozen countries will compete in front of some 30,000 people in Oulu, Finland, at the 24th annual Air Guitar World Championship. They will be judged on technical skills (which are different from those needed to play an actual guitar), stage presence and “airness.”

Airness “is that spark of creativity. Someone who makes the song come alive,” explains Eric “Mean” Melin, who won the 2013 world title by swinging his air guitar behind his back, Kip Winger style. “We want to express ourselves in a way that goes beyond what a ‘there’ guitar can do.”

Also essential to being a great air guitarist: a sense of irony. “You have to know it’s ridiculous,” Melin says, “but also be really passionate about it.” ◆

Own the "Gem of the Century"

Incredibly rare find is now available to the public for ***ONLY $59!***

For centuries, the "Big Four"—diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires—ruled the gem world. When tanzanite debuted in 1967, it was a sensation. Unlike those other stones, which are mined all over the world, tanzanite can be found in only one place on Earth: in the remote Merelani Hills in the shadow of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa.

HUGE SAVINGS
TAKE 85% OFF THE
KARATU TANZANITE RING
WHEN YOU USE YOUR OFFER CODE

Gem of the century meets deal of the century. With its remarkable rarity and unique gemstone qualities, it's no wonder that experts have dubbed it, "the gemstone of the 20th century." In recent years, top-quality tanzanite gems have fetched higher prices at auction than rubies, emeralds or diamonds! But because we buy direct and use our own designers, we are able to offer you this rare beauty for **ONLY $59!**

What makes tanzanite so irresistible to jewelers and gem experts? Part of its appeal is the beautiful violet blue color. Tanzanite is also trichroic—which means that three different colors are visible when the stone is viewed from different angles.

"This ring is unbelievable. I've owned some spectacular high-dollar gemstones in my life and this ring will compete with any of them!" —Katharine, Shreveport, LA

Henry Platt, past president and chairman of Tiffany & Company, called Tanzanite "The most important gemstone discovery in over 2,000 years."

A gemstone found only one place on earth, means supply is extremely limited. Get your hands on the *Karatu Tanzanite Ring* before they're gone!

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Experience the rare beauty of the *Karatu Tanzanite Ring* for one month. If you're not completely awestruck, simply send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the sale price. We want you to feel like you got the deal of the century!

With over 4,000 sold, we currently have less than 2,000 in stock!

Karatu Tanzanite Ring ~~$399~~*

Offer Code Price *Only* **$59** **+ S&P** *Save $340!*

You must use the insider offer code to get our special price.

1-800-333-2045

Your Offer Code: KTR446-02
Please use this code when you order to receive your discount.

Stauer® 14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. KTR446-02,
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 www.stauer.com

Rating of A+

** Special price only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.*

1 1/5 carats of geniune tanzanite • Lab-created white Diamond*Aura* accents • .925 sterling silver setting • Whole ring sizes 5–10

Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices™

A NEW VISION OF THE HOLY LAND

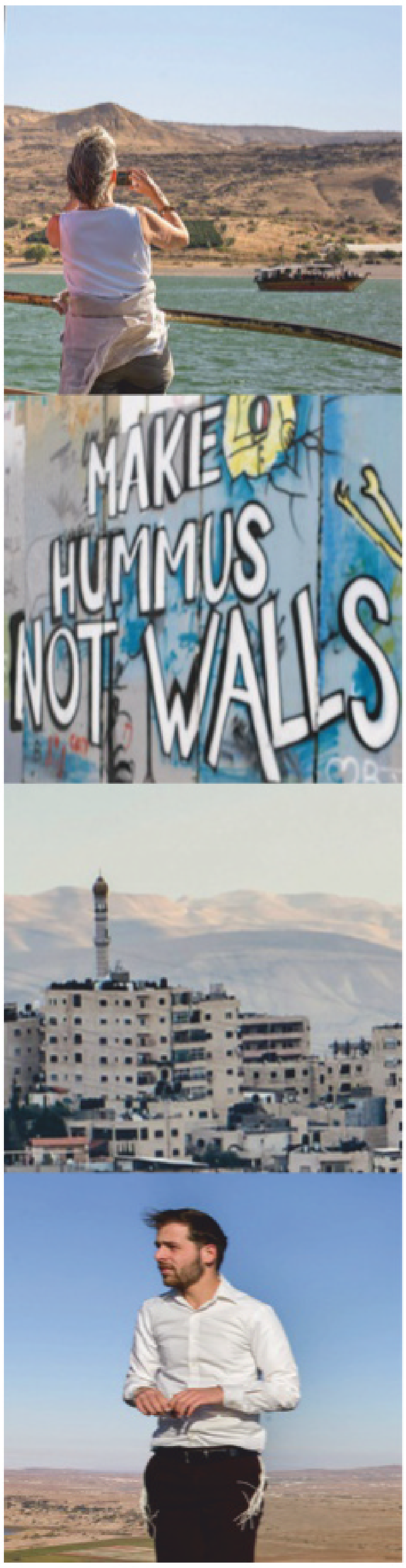
WITH CONFLICT RAGING AGAIN IN ISRAEL, A FEARLESS INITIATIVE

St. Peter's Church rises above the ancient port of Jaffa, today a bustling neighborhood abutting Tel Aviv.

REVEALS A COMPLEX REALITY THAT FEW VISITORS EVER SEE

by **GERALDINE BROOKS**

photographs by DAVID DEGNER



From top: cruising on the Sea of Galilee; graffiti on the Palestinian side of the separation barrier; the Arab village of Anata, near Jerusalem; a Jewish visitor gazes into Syria from atop the Golan Heights.

N THE FIERCE MORNING LIGHT of Caesarea, we hike down the beach, following the line of a ruined aqueduct that dates from the era of Herod the Great. The golden sand is littered with tiny russet tiles. Peering up into the dunes, we shade our eyes as our guide points out their source—the crumbling floor of what's believed to have been a diplomat's home when this Mediterranean port was an administrative center for the Roman occupation of Judea, some 2,000 years ago. Farther on, we see evidence of the Muslim conquest of the city 600 years later, ushering in Arab rule that lasted until the Crusades. Later, in 1884, Bosnian fishermen settled this shore, and the minaret of their mosque now punctuates a lively tourist precinct beside the leafy and affluent Israeli town where the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, makes his home.

It's our first morning in Israel, and already we've covered thousands of years of overlapping cultures, a perfect introduction to this tiny notch of land, so long inhabited, so often fought over and brimming with stories that have shaped the world. The group I'm with, mostly members of a Lutheran church in Lake Forest, Illinois, outside Chicago, is part of a tourist boom that last year brought four million visitors to this nation of fewer than nine million people. At many stops, we are surrounded by a babel of languages, representing visitors from every corner of the world, all drawn to this land and its stirring history. But our experience differs from that of most visitors. Instead of one guide, we have two—an Israeli and a Palestinian—and each gives a dramatically different perspective on everything we see. During the next week, we will travel from places of worship to archaeological sites and into private homes, crossing and recrossing Israeli military checkpoints and the approximately 285-mile separation barrier that divides much of this society.

Our Israeli guide is Oded Mandel, 38, the son of Romanian Jews, whose father survived the Holocaust as a child. Oded's parents immigrated to Israel in the 1970s, after the Jewish state reportedly made cash payments to the oppressive regime of Nicolae Ceausescu in exchange for exit visas. Oded serves as a reserve officer in the Israel Defense Forces. Bearded and

The Mejdi Tours group at the 18th century Al-Jazzar Mosque, in Acre. The Ottoman governor Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar was based in the city from 1775 to 1804.

bespectacled, he describes himself as “proud in my military service, in being Jewish, proud in my parents and what they did to come here.”

Aziz Abu Sarah, also 38, a Palestinian Muslim, lives under occupation in his birthplace, East Jerusalem. He was 9 years old during the first Palestinian Intifada, when Israeli soldiers burst into his bedroom one night to arrest his older brother, Tayseer, who was accused of throwing stones. Tayseer went to prison and, after his release nine months later, died from injuries he sustained there.

I first visited Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories during that uprising, in the winter of 1987. I was a young correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, dodging stones and rubber bullets to interview boys like Tayseer as well as reservists like Oded. I empathized with the Palestinians, many still children, risking their lives to protest poverty and daily indignity. But I also felt the crushing anxiety of Israelis, especially Holocaust survivors and terror victims, and I sympathized with soldiers, many of whom despised their new duties skirmishing with civilians. I also grew frustrated, in the safe comfort of European and American cities, with the smug certainties of friends who could feel sympathy for only one side. Either all Israelis were brutalizing oppressors or all Palestinians were bloodthirsty terrorists. I wished my acquaintances could spend even a week doing what I did, listening to stories from both sides that were often equally harrowing.

> “*THAT'S* THE **SEA OF GALILEE?**
> IT LOOKS LIKE A LITTLE
> LAKE IN WISCONSIN!”

Aziz Abu Sarah created Mejdi Tours to offer just such an experience. He was well aware that most visitors receive just one view: Jewish tourists and many Christian groups focus heavily on Jewish history and rarely visit the West Bank or interact with Palestinians. Palestinian tours, by contrast, focus on difficulties of life under occupation and the Christian pilgrimage sites in Palestinian towns such as Bethlehem, while millennia of Jewish history is ignored.

Aziz, like an archaeologist at one of the country’s celebrated *tels*, or archaeological mounds, had the idea to present visitors with the multiple narratives of the people who share this land, digging down layer by layer and story by story, undaunted by complexity—indeed, reveling in it.

ARRIVING IN NAZARETH feels like crossing an invisible border into an Arab country. Minarets stud the skyline, mixing with church spires. Clutching falafel sandwiches, we wander past neon signs in Arabic and women wearing colorfully embroidered Palestinian dresses. In the market, spice sacks gape

Oded Mandel (left) and Aziz Abu Sarah in front of Jerusalem's Old City. Behind the 7th-century Dome of the Rock is modern West Jerusalem.

open, revealing bright saffron and paprika. Cardamom and coffee scent the air.

The Chicagoans I'm with are a well-traveled group, mostly professionals, but only a few have been to Israel before. They lob questions at our guides. Though Aziz's and Oded's perspectives are not aligned, they share an easy, bantering relationship. Aziz, wearing a pearl-buttoned Western-style shirt that signals his love of country music, is naturally ebullient, with the affect of a stand-up comic. Oded, affable and measured, says he likes the Mejdi Tours approach "as a way to challenge what I am thinking." Frequently, each offers the same caveat before answering a question: "It's complicated."

"AND NOW, I'M GOING TO **BLESS MY CHILDREN**. IT'S GOING TO TAKE A WHILE."

Now some in our group are struggling to understand the legal status of the people in Nazareth, which is one of the largest Palestinian communities within Israel. Arab Israelis, or Palestinian citizens of Israel, as most prefer to be called, make up 21 percent of Israel's population. They carry Israeli passports, can vote in national elections and send Palestinian members to the Knesset, or Parliament. Why, one traveler asks, did some Arabs stay inside the new State of Israel while so many others fled during the Arab-Israeli War of 1948?

Oded gives the Israeli narrative, explaining how European Jews, fleeing pogroms and discrimination, began to return to their ancient homeland in the 19th century, when it was under Ottoman and later British rule. Occasional acts of violence between Arabs and Jews turned to outright conflict when Jewish migration accelerated during and after the Second World War, as displaced refugees and survivors had few other places to go. In 1947, as the British mandate was ending, the United Nations voted to partition the land into separate homelands for Jews and Arabs. "The Jewish side said, 'Yes, we need a state right now.' We tried to live here in peace, we acknowledged partition," Oded says. "But the Arabs said 'No,' and in 1948 we had to fight five different Arab armies" during what Israelis call the War of Independence.

When Aziz takes up the narrative, he uses the Palestinian term for the 1948 war: *al-Nakba*, the Catastrophe. He describes the killing of Palestinian civilians by Jewish paramilitaries. "People were terrified," he says. Arabic radio broadcasts fanned the panic, warning of massacre and rape. In fear for their lives, huge numbers fled to the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as to Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. "They thought the fighting would end in a few days, and they would come back to their homes. They were not allowed to, and those who fled—at least 700,000 people—became refugees."

Oded interjects that more than 800,000 Jews were themselves forced to flee Arab countries such as Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yemen following violent reactions to Israel's founding.

"I don't accept that parallel," counters Aziz. "What Egypt did is not the Palestinians' responsibility."

The discussion is interrupted when our bus rounds a curve on an olive-studded hillside and a shimmering sheet of water comes into view. "*That's* the Sea of Galilee?" exclaims one

In Jerusalem, volunteers harvest olives for oil that will be sold to raise funds for the Augusta Victoria Hospital, which cares for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza.

incredulous Midwesterner. “It looks like a little lake in Wisconsin!” This issue of scale will come up again and again—the trickle of water that is the “mighty” Jordan River, even the size of the disputed land itself, which is slightly smaller than New Jersey. It is vividly on display in the Golan Heights, in Israel’s far north, where barbed wire surrounds an army post that looks into Syria. A sign indicates that Damascus lies just 60 kilometers, or 37 miles, away.

FOR A LONG TIME after the death of his brother, Aziz would not have listened to an Israeli perspective like Oded’s. A self-described radical bent on revenge, Aziz refused to learn Hebrew because it was the “language of the enemy.” But, after graduating from high school, he couldn’t get a decent job, so he joined a class at a language center designed for recent Jewish immigrants. For the first time, he met an Israeli who wasn’t a soldier. His teacher was sensitive and welcoming. “Since I didn’t know enough Hebrew to argue with her, we had to become friends first,” he tells me.

That experience kindled a new curiosity. Aziz went to work for a Jewish ceramics company in the ultra-Orthodox Jerusalem neighborhood of Mea She’arim (“My employers were very good to me”), and attended an Evangelical Christian Bible college in Jerusalem. (“I didn’t want to know what Muslims *think* Christians believe. I wanted to understand from Christians what they believe.”) Aziz then joined a support group for those who had lost a family member in the conflict; members shared their stories and discussed reconciliation.

In front of often-hostile audiences, he retold the story of Tayseer’s death alongside an Israeli with his or her own tragic tale of violence and bereavement. He saw that such stories had immense power to change people’s thinking, and he expanded on that experience by creating a radio program, in Hebrew and Arabic, in which Israeli and Palestinian guests would each speak about a dramatic change in their life or attitude. Eventually, Aziz’s activism brought him to the attention of Scott Cooper, then a director of George Mason University’s Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution in Fairfax, Virginia, where Aziz was recruited to create programs in interfaith outreach, peace-building, negotiation and government reform, which he then led in person in Afghanistan and Syria and in online courses for Iranians.

In 2009, Aziz and Cooper created Mejdi Tours, adhering to strict principles of social and environmental responsibility. The company has spent more than $900,000 in the communities it visits, and its tours and tourists have spent $14 million at local businesses. Groups are almost never booked in chain hotels and are encouraged to shop at small stores or fair-trade co-ops. The company offers similar multinarrative tours in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraqi Kurdistan and other places that have experienced conflict.

"In a place like Barcelona, people can't stand tourists, because they don't connect with the locals," Aziz says. "We're all about making connections." He quotes the 14th-century Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta: "Travel makes you speechless, then it turns you into a storyteller."

ON FRIDAY MORNING, as we prepare to explore the ancient port city of Acre, a mixed Jewish-Arab city on the northwest coast, Aziz mentions the widespread view that the city has the country's best hummus. "Personally, I don't agree with that," he adds.

"Me neither," says Oded.

"Finally, we have one narrative here," Aziz quips.

We visit the green-domed Al-Jazzar Mosque just as worshipers are arriving for Friday midday prayers, the week's most important communal observance. Most of the travelers have never set foot in a mosque. They gaze at the intricate tilework adorned with calligraphic inscriptions from the Quran. Since Islam regulates every aspect of a believer's life, Aziz explains, the imam's sermon may extend beyond the spiritual, touching on some matter of daily existence—diet, say, or finance. Or the sermon might be intensely political, which is one reason demonstrations often erupt on Fridays after prayers.

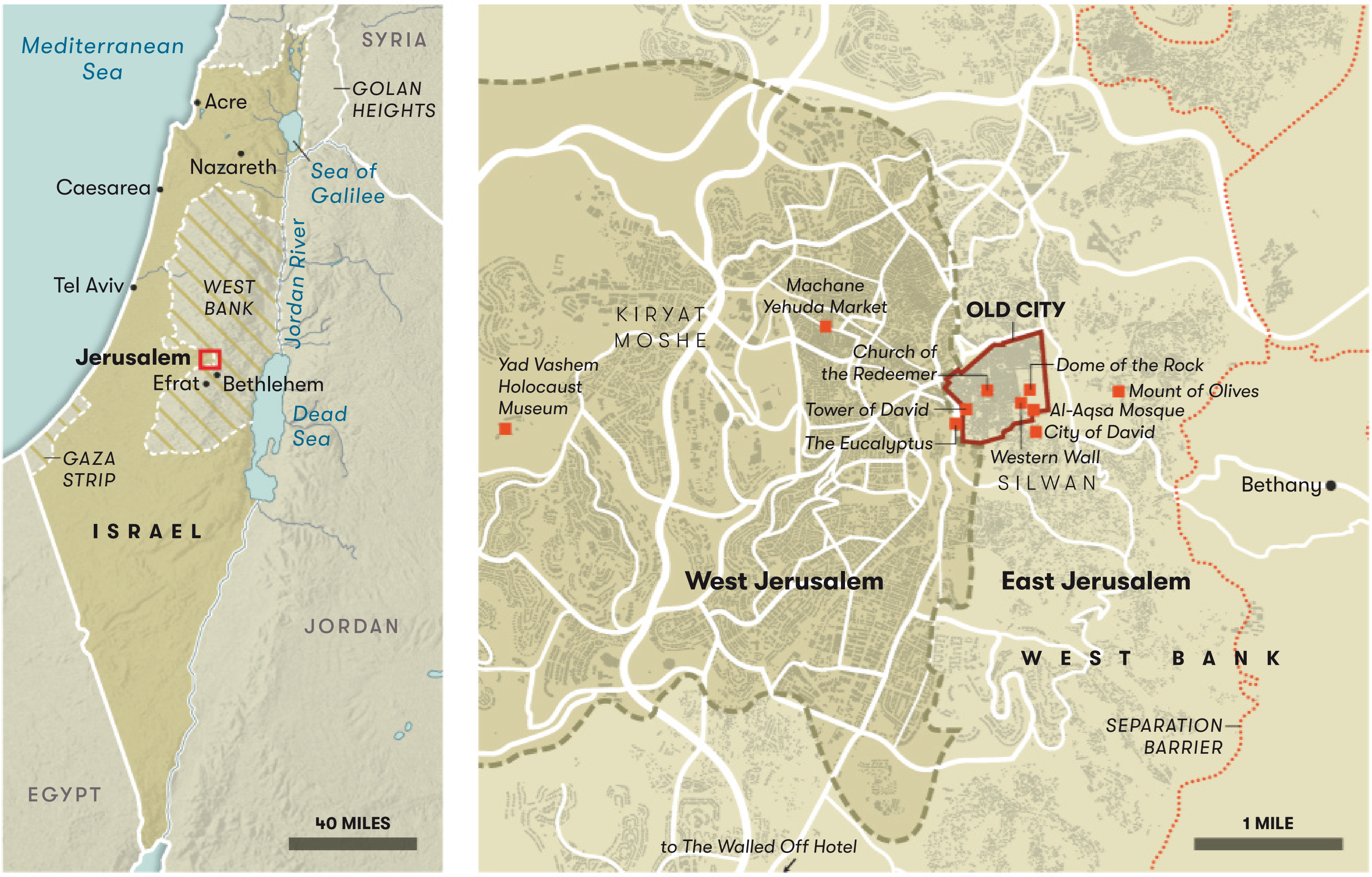
Later, on the road to Jerusalem, Oded remarks that Friday is special for Jews as well, as sunset marks the beginning of *Shabbat*, the Sabbath. "You'll see that the traffic is going to get lighter. Religious people will be walking to synagogue." Soon we are walking ourselves, having left the bus behind at the entrance to Kiryat Moshe, an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood where driving is discouraged between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday.

At the apartment of Rabbi Joshua Weisberg, we squeeze around a table, humming along as his family sings a traditional song to greet the Sabbath. "And now," says the rabbi, "I'm going to bless my children. It's going to take a while." There are eight children, ranging in age from 3 to 20. The eldest, a daughter, is away, studying at a religious seminary, but one by one the others come to the head of the table, snuggling against their father as he embraces them and whispers the ancient Israelite blessing: "May God shine his face upon you and show you favor. . . . "

Over dumpling soup and platters of chicken, Rabbi Weisberg tells us that the same blessing was found etched onto a 2,800-year-old silver amulet excavated at an archaeological site only a few miles from the apartment. "A parent in Isaiah's Jerusalem probably put that amulet on his child, expressing the same hopes and concerns, in the same Hebrew I prayed tonight," he says. "That's one of the reasons it's important for me to be here—to feel that continuity of Jewish life in this place."

When the rabbi's two eldest daughters finished high school, they chose to do two years of national service, working with disadvantaged and disabled kids, which is an alternative to military service open to religious youth. But the third daughter plans to join the army, a controversial choice among Orthodox girls. "Israel defends me," she told her father. "I won't serve?" To the rabbi, that independence of mind is welcome. "I want my

Crossing Boundaries


Mediterranean Sea
SYRIA
Acre
GOLAN HEIGHTS
Nazareth
Sea of Galilee
Caesarea
Jordan River
Tel Aviv
WEST BANK
Jerusalem
Efrat
Bethlehem
Dead Sea
GAZA STRIP
ISRAEL
JORDAN
EGYPT
40 MILES
KIRYAT MOSHE
Machane Yehuda Market
OLD CITY
Church of the Redeemer
Dome of the Rock
Mount of Olives
Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum
Tower of David
Al-Aqsa Mosque
City of David
The Eucalyptus
Western Wall
SILWAN
Bethany
West Jerusalem
East Jerusalem
WEST BANK
SEPARATION BARRIER
1 MILE
to The Walled Off Hotel

MAP: GUILBERT GATES

children to be Jewish, and to have a connection with God—I'd be devastated if they didn't have that. But for the rest, they will decide."

On the way back to our hotel, Aziz, who had not met Rabbi Weisberg before, is enthusiastic about his humor and openness. "I told him I'd like him to be involved with more of our groups. He said, 'Are you sure you want me? I'm a right-wing guy.' I told him, 'That's *why* I want you—I know plenty of leftists already.'"

THE WEST BANK SETTLEMENT of Efrat, about an hour south of Jerusalem, consists of red-roofed residences slung across seven hilltops, and is surrounded by long-settled Palestinian villages. Efrat is populated mainly by traditional religious Zionists, many of whom believe they have a national and spiritual imperative to settle the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria. But lots of residents, says Shmil Atlas, who directs development in the settlement, move there for other reasons, too. He cites the settlement's proximity to Jerusalem, good schools, a well-educated professional community, as well as cost: a three-bedroom house, for example, can be bought for about the same price as a one-bedroom apartment in Jerusalem.

Efrat is now home to about 12,000 Israelis, and the community plans to grow by 60 percent over the next few years. Part of the settlement is in lockdown this morning, because of suspected infiltrators detected by electronic sensors. When we arrive, security personnel are searching house to house. Palestinians who usually work here have been banned from entering. (No infiltrators were found.)

Despite the heightened tension, Atlas paints a sunny picture for us of the settlement's relationship to its Palestinian neighbors. Nearby villagers, Atlas says, are glad of the work the settlement offers—around a thousand jobs, mostly in construction, maintenance and agriculture. Since most of the Israeli residents commute to work in Jerusalem, he jokes that by day the mayor of Efrat is "the mayor of a Palestinian city." One woman in our group is clearly taken with Efrat—the crisp, luminous air of its hilltop setting, the charming villas splashed with bougainvillea.

But the cost to Palestinians of ongoing settlement expansion is on stark display less than ten miles north, where the town of Bethlehem is being slowly choked by military checkpoints and is unable to grow because of the looming separation barrier. "The whole town is essentially walled in," the Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, president of Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts & Culture, tells the group. When Raheb's mother was hospitalized for cancer treatment in East Jerusalem, he was able to get a permit from Israel to visit her; his mother's sisters were denied. When his father-in-law was suffering a heart attack, a border guard required him to exit the ambulance and walk through the checkpoint. He died a few days later.

"We have no room to grow," Raheb laments. "It is destroying the character of the little town, and its economy." A quarter of Bethlehem's work force is unemployed, and the need to use every inch of land means little green space. "Our kids don't know what spring looks or smells like," he says. But Raheb, a Palestinian Christian, paraphrases a comment attributed to Martin Luther, on the essential need to retain hope: "If the world is ending tomorrow, go out and plant an olive tree." He fulfills that ideal by leading the sole Palestinian university dedicated to arts and culture. "We are educating the next generation of creative leaders in Palestine," he says proudly.

Snarled in traffic at a checkpoint, the traveler who had earlier been drawn to Efrat now works through her feelings. "I thought, I'd like to live there: It's intellectual, it's a mix of young and old, it's a really pretty community. But then in Bethlehem you see how suffocated they are. It's like a ghetto."

To Aziz, this is how a Mejdi trip is supposed to work. "Most people who come here will hear only one of these two narratives," he says. "If they come here already very pro-Palestinian, I'll say, let me push you a bit harder to see the other side. Same thing if they're very pro-Israel. Being able to see the other side doesn't mean you have to agree with it."

ONE MORNING, we find ourselves on the Mount of Olives—picking olives. It's a volunteer effort for the beleaguered Augusta

Victoria Hospital, a Lutheran institution that cares for about 700 patients a day from Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, specializing in oncology and nephrology. The gray-green olive groves cover the hillside, and the Chicagoans climb into tree branches to harvest ripe fruit onto waiting tarps. Oil from these 800 trees will be sold to raise funds for the hospital, which has been under severe financial pressure, especially since the Trump administration halted aid to the Palestinians. Previously, such aid covered almost a quarter of the hospital's bills, explains Pauliina Parhiala of the Lutheran World Federation. "There are USAID stickers on a lot of the equipment."

Money isn't the only challenge. Palestinian hospital staff who live in the West Bank are sometimes delayed at checkpoints. Not quite two-thirds of the Gazans who apply to come to the hospital receive permission to enter Israel, and sometimes the parents of children who need dialysis or chemotherapy are denied entry on security grounds. Still, Parhiala says, medicine is a bright spot of Palestinian and Israeli cooperation. Palestinian doctors receive overwhelming support from Israeli colleagues, training together and working side by side. "Even in the most difficult times, this has continued, and that's a ray of hope for me," Parhiala says.

Later, as Oded and Aziz lead the group through the narrow alleyways of Jerusalem's Old City, Aziz unfolds his story as a Jerusalemite. Although born here, he is merely a permanent resident, not a citizen. After the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it annexed East Jerusalem and 28 surrounding Palestinian villages, home

Guests dance in the family home of Aziz Abu Sarah. A photograph of Aziz's brother Tayseer, who died in 1991, hangs on a wall in the background.

Two of Rabbi Joshua Weisberg's children at the Jerusalem home of he and his wife, Chana Jenny. The Weisbergs moved to Israel from the U.S. in the late 1980s.

to some 70,000 Palestinians, including Aziz’s family. Those Palestinians were not granted citizenship, and though they are eligible to apply for it, the process is difficult. Even Aziz’s tenuous residency status can be revoked if the government determines he is not “centering his life” in the city. That’s a risk for someone who runs an international travel company, has lived in the United States, and works on conflict resolution around the globe.

Last September, Aziz announced that he would run for mayor of Jerusalem, intending to take a case to court to test the right of a noncitizen to do so. But he was assailed from both sides before he could even file suit. He learned that his Israeli-issued residency permit was suddenly under review. Activists linked to the Palestinian Authority threw eggs at him and threatened his life for breaking with a long-standing election boycott and “legitimizing” the Israeli occupation. (Only about 2 percent of Palestinians who are eligible to vote in Jerusalem’s municipal elections actually do so.) Aziz eventually withdrew, but he still thinks his strategy was the right one. “Our leaders aren’t pragmatic,” he laments. “Instead of opening a discussion, they resort to violence and threats.”

One evening, our group visits Aziz’s family home, in the village of Bethany, just beyond the area annexed by Israel. Aziz’s father built the large house himself, and planted trees and gardens, only to learn that living in the house would disqualify the family as residents of Jerusalem. The family faced a choice between staying in the home and losing the right to travel freely to and from the city of their birth, or moving into a cramped apartment within the city lines. They chose the apartment, to protect their status. Today they may only visit the home in Bethany, never sleep there.

On the wall of the house’s main salon is a photograph of Aziz’s brother, Tayseer. When 19-year-old Tayseer was released from prison, in 1991, he was vomiting blood. His family rushed him to the hospital, but it was too late. Aziz reflects that it was hard to abandon a desire for revenge, but demonizing and dehumanizing the enemy, he says, only serve to fuel the conflict. He realized he had a choice to defy that impulse.

From the kitchen, Aziz’s mother, aunts and sister-in-law emerge with huge pots of *maqluba*, “upside down” in Arabic. With great flourish, they invert the pots and present perfectly layered towers of rice, chicken and vegetables. A band whose members are Israeli and Palestinian performs songs reflecting both traditions. Aziz and his nephews teach us some Arabic dance moves while his parents, clad in traditional Palestinian robes, look on in amusement.

ON SUNDAY MORNING, we make our way through the teeming alleys of the Old City, where merchants pushing handcarts cry out for right of way through processions of Franciscan monks in rope-belted robes and hordes of tourists. Hidden behind a high wall, we find the 19th-century Church of the Redeemer. Its cool, geranium-decked courtyard is an unexpected oasis from the bustle of the ancient city.

> HE JUST WANTED TO “**SIT AND SCHMOOZE** OVER COFFEE, LIKE NORMAL NEIGHBORS.”

After a church service, Oded brings us to the Western Wall, the last remnant of the Second Temple, which was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. Known as the Kotel, it is the most sacred space in Judaism. As the midday sun beats down on the ancient stones, Oded holds up a copy of a famous photograph. It shows young Israeli soldiers in the Six-Day War who were the first to fight their way through Jordanian troops and minefields, uniting the city under Jewish control. The soldiers’ faces are battle-weary, but their expression as they gaze up at the wall is filled with awe. “Two thousand years of yearning in this photograph,” says Oded.

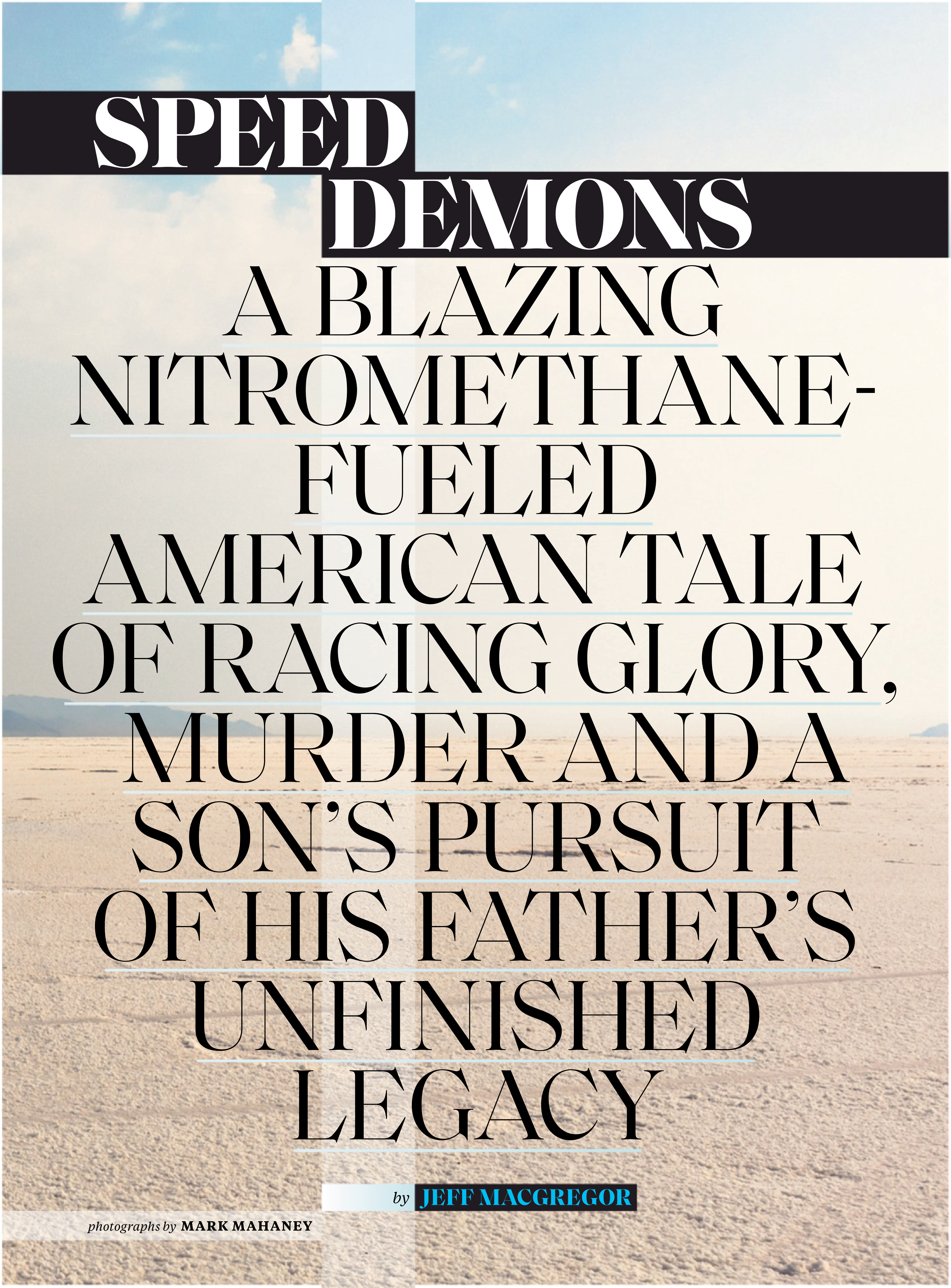
Oded outlines the evolution of Israel’s military vision, from the euphoric invincibility born of that swift victory in 1967—when Israel pushed the Syrian Army back from the strategic Golan Heights, drove the Egyptians out of the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza and the Jordanians out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem—to the beginning of the military occupation there that continues more than 50 years later. Then he explains the attempted reversal in 1973, when Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Yom Kippur, the holy day when Jews fast and pray. It took hours to contact key reservists and several days to mobilize the unready forces. “We thought we were on the verge of the third temple destruction,” says Oded, meaning that it seemed possible the Jewish state could be wiped out, as it was in ancient times.

That afternoon is spent at Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust memorial and museum. I wander outside, to the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations, in search of a plaque honoring Dervis and Servet Korkut, Muslims who sheltered a Jewish girl during the Nazi occupation of Sarajevo. Dervis Korkut, an Islamic scholar and the national museum’s chief librarian, also saved a masterpiece of medieval Judaica, a rare illuminated codex known as the Sarajevo Haggadah.

In 2008, I wrote a novel, *People of the Book*, based on the journey of that haggadah, imagining the stories of those who carried it to safety over hundreds of years. The haggadah was created in Spain before the Inquisition, at the time of *La Convivencia*, or The Coexistence, when Muslims, Christians and Jews lived peacefully together until violent Catholic bigotry forced Muslims and Jews

CONTINUED ON PAGE 116

At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the tour group climbs the steps to Golgotha, the place traditionally identified as the site of Jesus’s crucifixion.



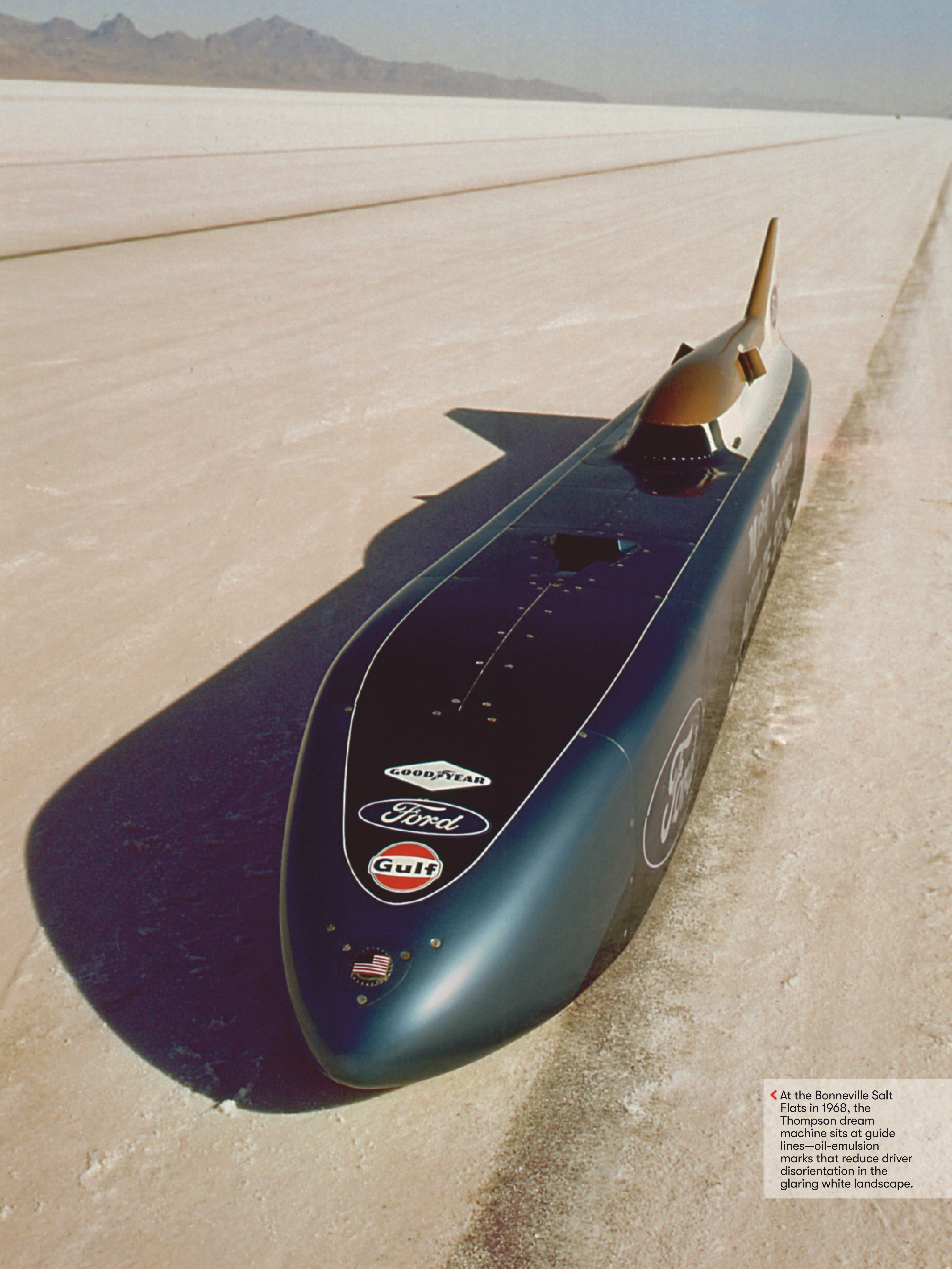
SPEED DEMONS

A BLAZING NITROMETHANE-FUELED AMERICAN TALE OF RACING GLORY, MURDER AND A SON'S PURSUIT OF HIS FATHER'S UNFINISHED LEGACY

by **JEFF MACGREGOR**

photographs by **MARK MAHANEY**

Setting the speed record, Danny Thompson says, took "five decades and a lot of elbow grease."


GOODYEAR
Ford
Gulf

At the Bonneville Salt Flats in 1968, the Thompson dream machine sits at guide lines—oil-emulsion marks that reduce driver disorientation in the glaring white landscape.

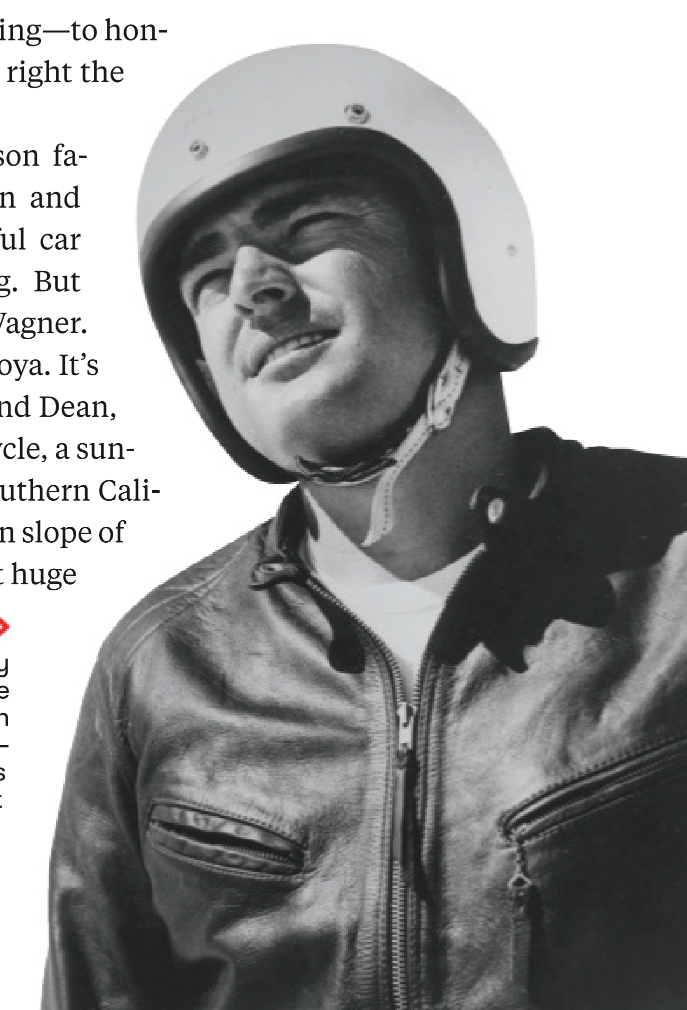
In the middle of the course, over that flying mile, **Mickey Thompson**'s speed was about equal to the muzzle velocity of a bullet fired from a lightly loaded small-caliber pistol: **406.60 miles per hour**. This was September 9, 1960, on the **Bonneville Salt Flats**. He became the fastest man in the world that day, the first American to go over 400 mph, **the fastest racer ever on land**. Unofficially, at least.

Because to earn the world land speed record, the car has to make two passes. Thompson's car—the *Challenger*, an 8,000-pound, 3,000-horsepower streamliner with four V-8 engines he'd chalked out on the garage floor, then built with his own hands—broke on the return run. But neither fame nor glory nor pride nor patriotism are bounded by the rule books, and that afternoon, under that high Utah sky, Mickey Thompson became a by-God American hero in the last great age of the black-and-white newsreel.

IN THE MIDDLE OF NEARLY THE SAME COURSE, over that same flying mile, under that same Utah sky, Danny Thompson's speed was even higher than his father's: 448.757 mph. This was August 12, 2018, on the Bonneville Salt Flats. Danny became the fastest piston-driven man in the world that day. Officially. Thompson's *Challenger 2*—a 5,200-pound, 6,000-horsepower dagger with two V-8 engines, built by his father's hands and by his own—did not break. It made both runs successfully. But neither fame nor glory nor pride nor patriotism are bounded by the rule books, and Danny Thompson remained not very famous, even as he surpassed his father, the murdered American hero from the last great age of the black-and-white newsreel.

This is the story of Mickey Thompson and Danny Thompson and a car. And OK, right off the top the whole deal feels like something out of ancient Greece, or Norse mythology, or maybe Hollywood—too big, too on the nose. Too Shakespearean. All vengeance and reckoning, the son takes up the blade of the fallen father—the murdered king—to honor and make whole and right the great man's fame.

The truth of Thompson father and Thompson son and that impossibly beautiful car is as old as storytelling. But it's not Sophocles or Wagner. It's not even Inigo Montoya. It's the Beach Boys or Jan and Dean, a kind of a piston ring cycle, a sunshot folk opera set in Southern California and on the western slope of Colorado and under that huge


In 1960, racer Mickey Thompson wore "fire leathers" and an open helmet. Drivers' protective suiting seams were sealed with duct tape in that era.

P.80: HOLLY MARTIN / THOMPSONLSR: PP. 82-83: THOMPSONLSR

blue Utah sky. And because this is an imperfect world, filled with greed and violence, even the blinding high-noon dazzle of those snow-white Salt Flats can't drive out the shadows and the ghosts and the darkness at the heart of the story.

Still, this isn't as much about justice or revenge or even closure as it is about a family of racers, racing. Not a reckoning. A reconciliation.

When they're running for speed on the flats, you can hear those engines Dopplering downrange from everywhere in the valley, howling so that even miles away there's something mournful in all that sunlight. And every car and every driver and the whole crazy story of speed and desire echoes down the years until it all feels like centuries ago. Because the car is an arrow across time.

Before the 1978 Baja 1000, Danny, left, and Mickey Thompson prepare for the Mexican off-road race in their long wheelbase Chevrolet pickup.

MARION LEE "MICKEY" THOMPSON was the hottest hot rod king America ever made—and he remade America in return. Born in 1928 in Southern California, he arrived at the right place in the right moment to ride the first crest of America's postwar car madness.

Not much of a student, he was an uncanny natural with cars. He was building them in the backyard from junk parts before he was old enough for a driver's license. He'd run them at Muroc Dry Lake bed. Flat-out, straight-line speed stuff. In the old snapshots he's a sharp-featured pale kid with an angle-iron crew cut in cuffed dungarees and a white T-shirt—the hot rod genius who barely finished high school as poster boy for all that tire-smoking, go-fast SoCal excess. Big engines! Wide tires! Street rods were a kind of high-performance folk art after the war, a symbol of sudden working-class prosperity and mobility and hell-for-leather freedom. In Mickey Thompson all those big American ideas found individual expression in street racing, drag racing, road and off-road racing. He was the hotshoe Paul Bunyan, a young giant out on a new frontier.

This is back when hot rods and rock 'n' roll were noisy evidence of social decay and juvenile delinquency, of decadence and premarital sex and parental disrespect. Which is how Hollywood framed it in movies like *Rebel Without a Cause* (see "The Chrome Jewels," p. 56).

All of which is important to remember when you get to the Mickey Thompson biographies. Earnest, well-meant and well-considered, they're generally straight-line stuff, too. They get you from A to B to C well enough, but if you really want insight into Mickey Thompson man and myth, you have to find his "autobiography." It's a slender little thing, from 1964, long out of print. The full title is *Challenger: Mickey Thompson's own story of his life of Speed*—capital "S"—and the cover states Thompson wrote the book "with" automotive and racing historian Griffith Borgeson.

The *life of Speed* may be Thompson's, but the voice of the book is surely Borgeson's. Written in the gloriously over-the-top style of the early 1960s motoring press, it is not only a florid sort of instep-kicking, aw-shucks Lives of the Saints, but an entertaining whitewash of the American garage—historically a fairly profane corner of American life. It also glosses, or worse, makes colorful, Thompson's habit of punching in the nose those he disagrees with. The book turns out to be a position paper on hot rodding, too, and getting fast cars off the street and onto the drag strip.

So here's Mickey Thompson, black haired and black tempered, a two-fisted precisionist and self-taught horsepower obsessive who could, would, will, can build anything, drive anything, trial-and-error anything—and then beat you flat with it.

He's no hoodlum. In fact he takes a job as a pressman at the *Los Angeles Times* to help

“I BLASTED OFF AND THE CAR FELT WONDERFUL. I WAITED FOR TIRES ***TO BREAK LOOSE*** AND THEY DIDN’T.”

THOMPSONLSR

pay for all the racing and engine building. He rarely sleeps. At night he makes the newspaper and during the day builds the cars. And manages a drag strip. And raises a family. His wife, Judy, cleans the house and feeds the kids and dry-fits the pistons on the engine rebuilds before he gets home. She’s a motorhead, too, and the children, Lyndy and Danny, daughter and son, are racers from the cradle. The whole racer family caught in dad’s planetary wheel spin. They spend every weekend in the station wagon on the way to the drag strip, to the track, to the high dry desert. He doesn’t invent drag racing but he helps perfect it. Mickey dreams up a thing called the slingshot dragster—a quarter-miler with the driver seated behind the rear axle for better traction.

Keep in mind he’s also racing sedans and open-wheelers out at Riverside racetrack, and down in Long Beach, and driving the length of Mexico in the deadly, legendary Carrera Panamericana. He’s always looking for an edge—or maybe the edge itself. He’s making a name for himself driving, and building and selling speed parts to the other gearheads. He’s well known in Southern California.

Until he wraps a small body around a pair of V-8 engines to make an extraordinary dragster, just for the hell of it. Just to see what it can do, and maybe find out how fast is fast. Turns out to be so fast, more than 266 mph, it makes him the fastest American ever. And now it’s got him the way it got all the others: the hunt for the world land speed record, out there in the distant shimmer.

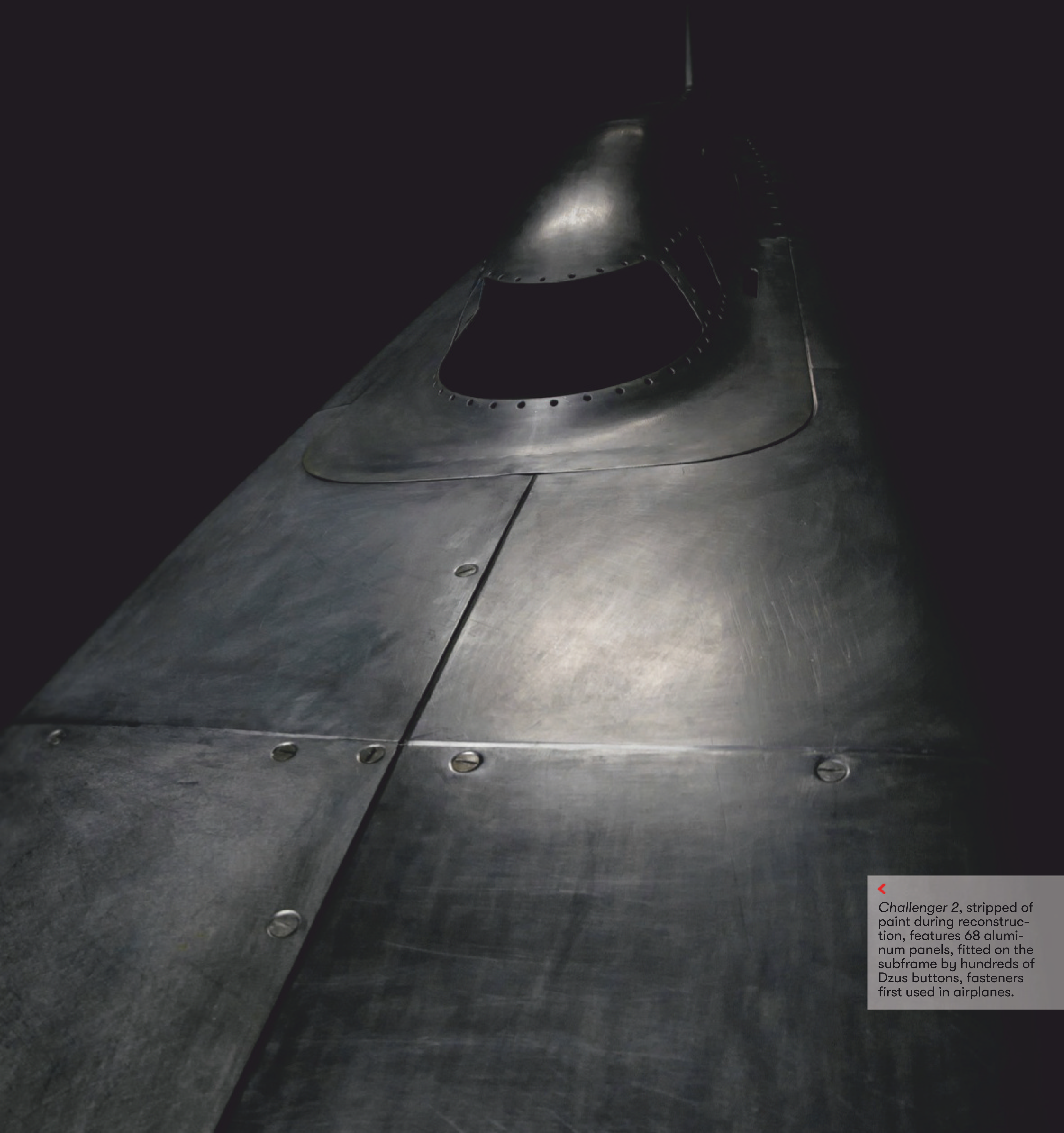
THE FIRST OFFICIAL fastest man on earth was a Frenchman, Count Gaston de Chasseloup-Laubat, driving a Jeantaud battery-electric car. Just before the turn of the last last century, in 1898, he zoomed along at an incredible 39.25 mph. *Après* that, the deluge.

The count launched a timeline of dreamers from that day to this, daredevils and scoundrels on the deserts and beaches of Belgium and England and France, Australia and Africa, California and Utah and Florida, aristocrats and paupers, stuntmen and grease monkeys, pump jockeys, cowboys and knights of the realm. They ran chain-driven steamers, buzzing electrics and repurposed 12-cylinder aircraft engines as big as garden sheds. Some were beautiful, some were laughable—men and machines, both—some were streamlined and some no more aerodynamic than a brick.

The cars became as famous as the drivers. The Fiat Mephistopheles. The Bluebird. The Chitty Bang Bang. The Green Monster. The Mormon Meteor. The Spirit of America. Henry Ford himself held the record for a couple of weeks in 1904 at 91.37 mph driving the Arrow.

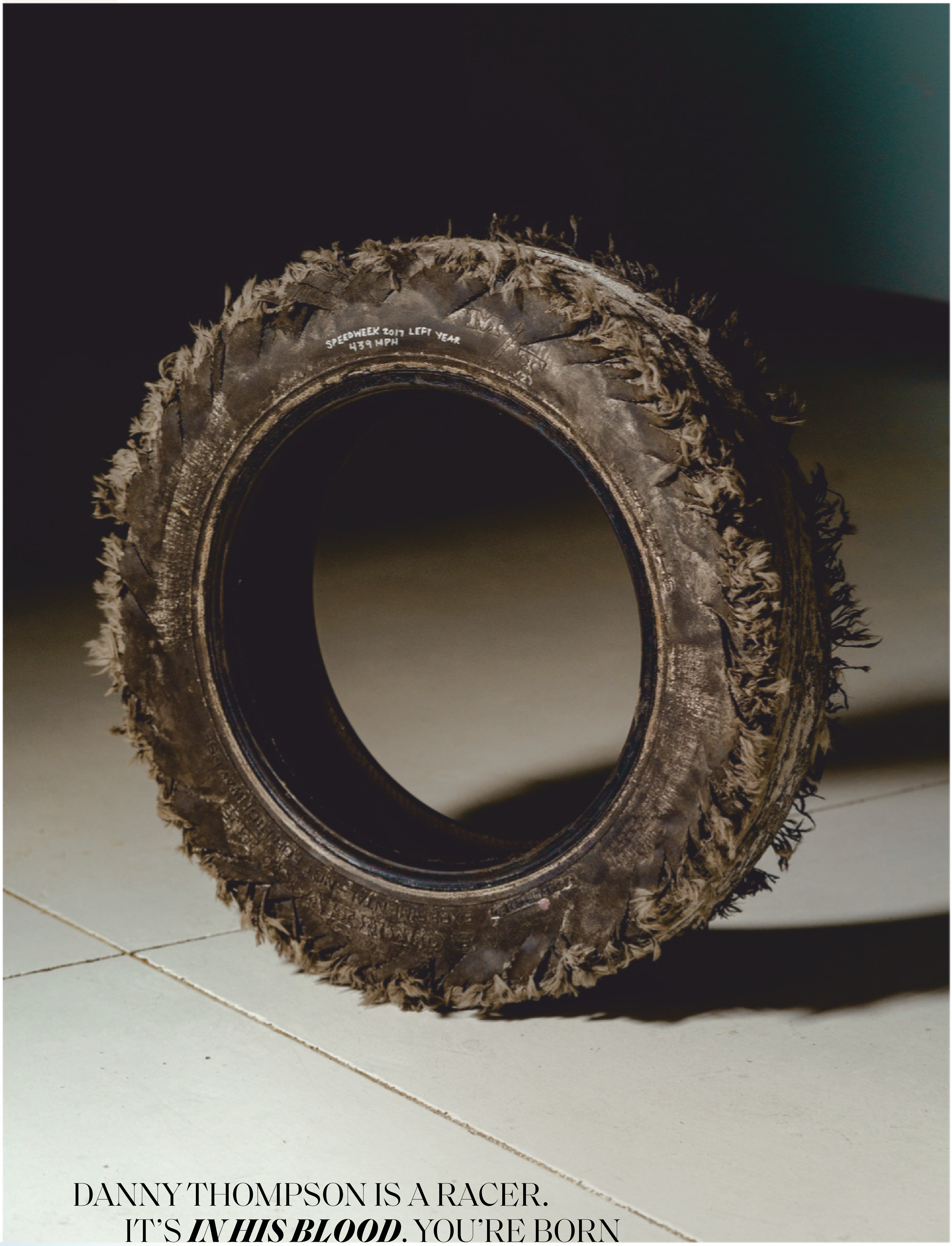
The world’s first fastest woman was Dorothy Levitt, a Brit, who drove 91 mph in 1906. By the time World War I had come and gone, the idea of a land speed record had caught the imagination of the modern world, like the race to the poles or a flight across the Atlantic. Every record was a headline. Every record made the newsreels. (So did the failures and the crashes and the fatalities. Broken cars and drivers were scattered on the sands of every continent.)

For decades, the British were best at it. Between the wars, Sir Malcolm Campbell was the 20th-century Prometheus. He set record after record in his magnificent Bluebirds, each bigger and faster than the last. He went west to Bonneville and south to Daytona and year after year speeds rose as



Challenger 2, stripped of paint during reconstruction, features 68 aluminum panels, fitted on the subframe by hundreds of Dzus buttons, fasteners first used in airplanes.

Damage to a *Challenger 2* tire shows the punishing stresses inflicted during Thompson’s 435.735 mph run during Speed Week 2017.


SPEEDWEEK 2017 LEFT YEAR
439 MPH

DANNY THOMPSON IS A RACER. IT’S ***IN HIS BLOOD***. YOU’RE BORN WITH IT. YOU’RE STUCK WITH IT.

P. 86: HOLLY MARTIN / THOMPSONLSR

records and his competition fell away.

After World War II cars and drivers were flirting hard with 400 mph, but no one had done it yet. Certainly no American. Through the 1950s the British, wearing their immaculate lab coats and carrying their clipboards and slide rules, continued their million-pound-sterling factory mega-projects, each car the product of wind-tunnel research and cutting-edge design and engineering. Meanwhile, the Yanks were building backyard streamliners out of war surplus belly tanks.

Into which world swaggers one Marion Lee Thompson, who then does what only Thompson can do. After that twin-engine dragster of his runs so fast, he hustles home, grabs a piece of chalk, draws the outline of a low, wide quad-engine streamliner on his garage floor. And starts to build. He takes four cast-off Pontiac V-8 engines and bends a frame around them, then wraps the whole thing in bodywork so snug his crew has to push him down into the seat like a jack-in-the-box. If it doesn't kill him it might make him famous. He calls it *Challenger*, paints it blue, hitches up the trailer and heads for Utah. He wears old-time motorcycle leathers and a crash helmet like a daredevil being shot from a cannon, goggles and an oxygen mask straight out of *Fahrenheit 451*. All of which at these speeds is a kind of prayer. The frame is what saves you, the roll cage, the Fates.

THE CAR DOES NOT HAVE COMPUTERIZED TRACTION CONTROL. "IT HAS ***DANNY CONTROL***."

He fires the engines and 1,000 feet away you feel the sound as a bad pressure in your chest. The course across the salt is about ten miles long depending on weather and the season, and razor straight. They measure the flying mile right in the middle. It takes four miles just to get the car up to speed, and you can hear it roaring down the whole valley under that impossible cerulean sky, the entire horizon perfect white and absolute blue as heaven's own threshold.

Here's Mickey Thompson in his own words—or at least Griffith Borgeson's—to describe it:

> *People often ask how I can shift all four of those transmissions at once, and how the linkage is made that makes it possible. When I laid the car out, I didn't attack all four gearboxes at once. I took on one, told myself that it had to work and made it work. Then the next one had to work, so I made brackets and linkage that made it work too. And I kept going that way until all four were linked up and working together. I have a knack for sensing optimum leverage points.*
>
> *I have one lever for low and high gears. You pull it all the way back low and push it forward for neutral. When you've done that, another lever falls right into your hand. You push it forward, in the same plane, and you're in second. Then you pull it back, grab the first lever again, pull it back and slightly to the side and you're in top gear. It's not too much different from shifting a passenger car, as anyone who has heard* Challenger *run can tell.*
>
> *I blasted off and the car felt wonderful. I waited for tires to break loose and they didn't. The biggest problem had always been getting up to 300 soon enough, which I never had been able to do. But this morning everything clicked and I could bear down with my throttle foot.*
>
> *Through the seat of my pants I sensed the tire diameters and they were all perfectly uniform it seemed, right to the thousandth of an inch. I felt for the clutches and they were locked solid, as they should be. I listened to all the sets of gears and they all sang in one precise key. I felt out for the distribution of weight from front to rear and it was perfect.*
>
> *I checked the two tachometers that spoke for the fore and aft pairs of engines. I never had been able to get them to follow each other perfectly. This morning they did. At 300 they were indicating identical revs. I stayed on the throttle and at 350 they still were together.* Yes! *At 375 they told me that the front engines and the rear engines, front wheels and rear wheels still were turning at the same, identical rate. I* still *stayed on the throttle and* Challenger *went like a dream. No more handling problems at all. The car finally was sorted out and I had the combination that worked. For the first time I didn't have to lift my throttle foot.*
>
> *Long before I rolled to a stop I knew that I'd broken 400 and while we refueled and Judy and Fritz and the whole gang were bursting with joy, the official time came over the field phone: 406.60 MPH.*

Fastest man alive, but to make it official, he has to turn the car around in under an hour and drive back the other way. The average of those two runs will be what gets him into the record book. The car breaks. Something in that impossible Rube Goldberg sequence of engines and linkages gives way.

He doesn't hold the official record, he's not certified—but in those grainy black-and-white film clips he's the fastest man alive and he's an American driving American equipment.

It didn't kill him. So it makes him famous.

The story is all blue sky and bootstraps so far.

* * *

PICTURE 1960 AMERICA as a gleaming TV sitcom kitchen of that time, bright with the latest labor-saving appliances and Formica and chrome. A tidy aspirational reflection of the new middle class to which we—or at least television advertisers—aspired. Now picture Mickey Thompson crashing through that kitchen wall in his fire-breathing supercar.

Without even setting the official record, Mickey Thompson becomes a national sensation—the flip side of America's prim, postwar, suburban self-image. He is brash, fearless, inexhaustible. He is sleepless, ingenious, ambitious. He can't stop himself. He designs cars on cocktail napkins; keeps a notepad in bed—you never know when you'll need to sketch out some shock absorber schematics. It's not just street rod magic now, either. It's big-ticket sponsorships and factory deals with Detroit. The year before he had left the *Los Angeles Times*. He builds open-wheel racers to challenge the old guard at the Indianapolis 500. He builds off-road racers to challenge the deserts of

Baja California. He builds a national speed parts business and a national tire business. He builds another car to challenge the world land speed record. He builds a series of stadium truck races. Mickey Thompson builds a Mickey Thompson empire. He's an engineer, a manufacturer, a driver, a promoter, an impresario. It's hard to sensationalize him, because he's so straight-up sensational.

A timing tag from the Southern California Timing Association verifies Danny Thompson's record-setting 448.76 mph (rounded up) run at Bonneville.

Out of the 1960s and into the 1970s and '80s, Mickey Thompson is as big a name as there is in motorsports. He grows out the crew cut, gets divorced, remarries. The collars get a little wider, and so does he, but the determination and innovation never flag. He'll beat you every which way and any way he can. Remember, this is all happening across the same arc of history that gets us from Benny Goodman to Woodstock to Prince, and from Korea to Khe Sanh to the surface of the moon. Mickey Thompson is supremely adaptive. From success to success—and, more important, failure to failure—he manages to thrive.

So even when he's not, the public thinks of Thompson as the fastest American ever. By 1965 jet power dominates the world land speed record, and American Craig Breedlove holds the absolute record at 600-plus mph in the *Spirit of America Sonic 1*. So Thompson puts his streamliner on the trailer and heads back to the Salt Flats in 1968. Not because he can outrun a jet, but because he's Thompson. A lighter car, narrower, twin-engined fore and aft, with a body like the fuselage of a wingless fighter plane, the car can still win the official piston-driven record. But he's rained out. As has been rumored, only God can stop Thompson. The car goes into storage.

By the mid-1980s, he's too busy, even by his own overachieving standards, so he takes on a partner for the stadium race events. Imagine the Los Angeles Coliseum decked out as a winding dirt track for off-road trucks, with tight turns and spectacular jumps and whoop-de-dos and mud flying and the noise and the crashes and the beer sales and you'll see it. It's a fan favorite from the first green flag.

The partner is Michael Goodwin, a successful, charismatic former concert promoter who runs a supercross series nearly identical in its appeal and specifications to Thompson's truck series: stadium dirt tracks and high-speed racing with lots of thrills. Two wheels instead of four. They'll run their two companies together. Goodwin will take over some of the administrative chores. On paper it's a match made in heaven.

From the beginning there's trouble. Goodwin is a tall, smart, look-at-me type with a line of grandstanding rock 'n' roll patter. Thompson would still rather build something than brag about it. They're at odds immediately.

Within the first few months Thompson realizes that Goodwin isn't paying out what the company owes—to Thompson or to anyone else. Goodwin stonewalls. Thompson sues. Goodwin takes the case all the way to the California State Court of Appeals. He loses. He owes Thompson more than half a million dollars, all of it gone, unaccounted for. He declares bankruptcy. This takes years.

In a different story, with different characters, maybe that's where the matter ends. A court ruling and a money judgment, and all the lawyers shake hands, because business is business, even after a bankruptcy. Happens all the time.

Not this time.

* * *

DANNY THOMPSON answered his phone early on the morning of March 16, 1988. "Somebody from my Dad's office called and said, 'Something's happened up in Bradbury. We don't know what it is.'" Danny drove fast up the freeway from Huntington Beach and found his father's street cordoned off. The local news helicopters were hovering overhead. Mickey Thompson, famous American racer, 59 years old, and his second wife, Trudy, 41, had been shot to death in their own driveway. It was a tabloid celebrity murder in the old SoCal style, a preamble to O.J., all that grainy aerial video and the telephoto newspaper images from 1,000 feet away.

There's money and jewelry conspicuous at the scene. It's not a botched robbery. It's a hit, an assassination. The neighbors hear the shots and the screaming and witness two men fleeing down the hill—on bicycles.

For days Thompson had been warning his family about Michael Goodwin's subtle and not-so-subtle threats. Of revenge, of violence. "He's taking everything I've got. He's destroying me," Goodwin told two friends at a 1988 dinner, according to court documents. "I'm going to take him out." But there was no case against Goodwin, no physical evidence he had anything to do with the murders.

Years passed. It was perhaps the most famous cold case in America.

Investigators came and went from the Los Angeles police and the county sheriffs and the district attorney's office and got nowhere. But Collene Thompson Campbell, Mickey's sister, the politically astute former mayor of San Juan Capistrano, never gave up. She kept pressuring the authorities for better, broader, deeper investigations. She wouldn't let anyone forget. A re-canvassing of the original witnesses eventually revealed what seemed like an unrelated comment from years earlier. A man matching Goodwin's description had been seen parked on the street near the Thompson home in Bradbury several days before the killings.

That was enough to reopen the case. The trial began in November 2006. In January 2007, a Los Angeles County jury convicted Michael Goodwin on two counts of first-degree murder, for having engineered the murders-for-hire of Mickey and Trudy Thompson. He was sentenced to consecutive life sentences. His 2015 appeal was denied, and he remains at the Richard J. Donovan State Prison in San Diego, California. The gunmen have never been found. Or even identified.

In 1988 Mickey had wanted to dust off *Challenger 2* and rewrite the record books with the Thompson name. He had even asked Danny to drive the car for him. He was murdered a month later.

* * *

WHAT DO YOU DO when your own father is a character out of American mythology? How long is the shadow he casts?

Danny Thompson is a racer. It's in his blood. You're born with it. You're stuck with it. It's indefinable, the one thing you can never outrun—an identity as much a matter of chromosomes as of character. It is a psychospiritual condition in which you hear exhaust noise as music and connect to the physical universe with hands at 10 and 2 and with an increasing pressure exerted at the tip of the right big toe.

Danny Thompson is his father's son. So Danny raced. Motocross, formula cars, off-road buggies and trucks. He was good at it, too, won a lot of races. Won championships. Of course the irony is Mickey forbade it. From the time he yanked Danny out of a quarter-midget racer at the age of 9 or 10, Mickey was adamant that Danny not race for a living. Mickey understood too well the dangers. Refused to sponsor him or help him in any way. So for a long time, Danny Thompson raced in secret.

They were close, but both were stubborn and headstrong. You see the family album now, the two of them getting the boat ready to go water-skiing; or leaning on the fender of a car, and you see Mickey Thompson, American icon and force of nature, standing with a slender kid wearing a shy half-smile.

That's why it felt like the end of one thing and the beginning of another, a new chapter for the whole family, when Mickey asked Danny to drive the second *Challenger*.

Danny can be hard to read. He's pretty intense, like his old man. But unlike his father he reminds himself not to be. He doesn't have to live up to a public persona, the way Mickey did. So he's often a little on guard—against himself. He is smart and funny and charming and can play pugnacious, but you can see why he inspires not only loyalty, but devotion and love from his team of builders and fabricators and mechanics, most of whom are volunteers. They helped him rebuild the car that his father first built in 1968.

Sitting in the kitchen, the second thing you notice is that he has hands like a blacksmith. The first thing is that he has a boy's face. Not boyish, but the wide smile and clear eyes of a boy, lined and grown old.

He is an artist with a welder's torch and a press brake and the big industrial cutters and benders out in his shop. And that's part of all this, too, the aesthetic of the car, the beauty of it, that rare and perfect alignment of form and function. You know immediately what this car is meant for. By comparison, all other cars, passenger cars especially, are compromised by convention or intention or cost. In that way every car is somehow expressive of its imperfections.

And it has to be said here that there's something holy about the American road, about driving, in the purity of speed and distance, out where the world can't catch you—not only in the absence of responsibility as Kerouac or Twain or Steinbeck suggest—but in velocity itself. Not just freedom or forgiveness, but absolution, even grace. In many ways you're only ever trying to outrun yourself.

So even today, high in the western mountains of Colorado, Danny keeps his guard up.

During Speed Week 2018, *Challenger 2*, fully restored, casts a long shadow at Bonneville. On a run, the engine blasts at 7,200 rpm.

HOLLY MARTIN / THOMPSONLSR

"I mean the guy's in jail for a double life sentence, and 154 years and whatever it is. But he still has enough money stashed where he can hire, you know. You can get a lot of stuff done from jail. So, are we still cognizant of all of that here today? People coming in and out? Uh, yeah. Is it, am I worried about it happening? I don't think so. I wouldn't be first on the list, but I would be second on the list."

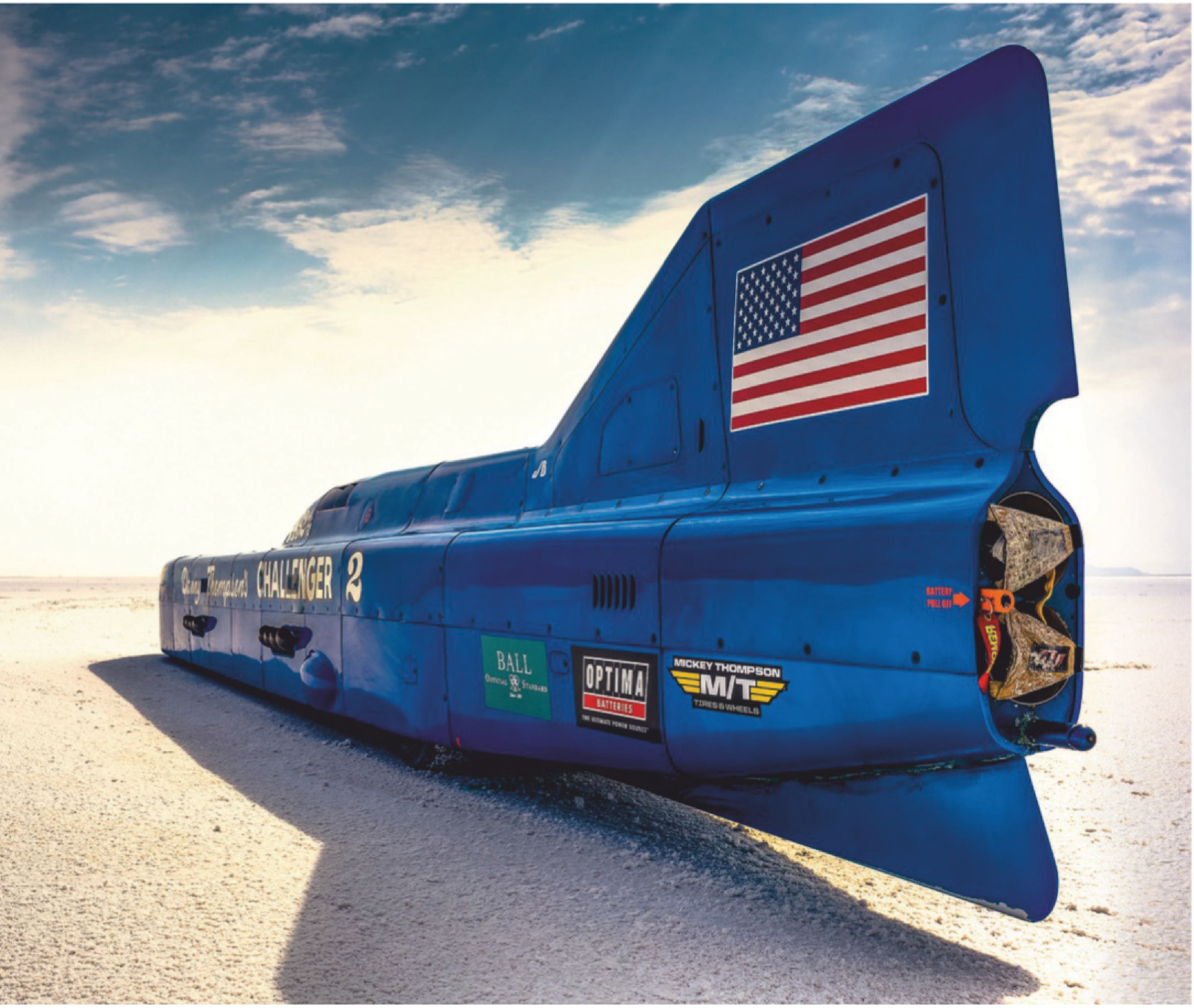
Who'd be first?

"Collene. My aunt. My dad's sister."

* * *

THEY START EARLY at Bonneville, when it's cool and the air is dense. It can be lonely on the flats at sunrise, and the Bonneville shadows are hundreds of feet long.

But there's a strange serenity inside your helmet for a few seconds too, even in that tunnel of noise, even in


Danny Thompson's CHALLENGER 2
BALL
OPTIMA BATTERIES
MICKEY THOMPSON M/T TIRES & WHEELS
BATTERY PULL OFF

that Old Testament thunder there's something very still, something fixed and unmoving and quiet and perfect and for a moment you're entirely, utterly free, free of people and their needs and their complications, free of appetite and anger and despair, free of joy and ambition, politics and money and love, free even of fear and hate, the whole mad world spinning away beneath you like a lathe until all at once and at last you are free of yourself.

By the time you recognize any of this stillness, it's gone.

Danny wears a high-tech synthetic firesuit and gloves and boots and a space-age helmet. But the frame is what might save him, the roll cage and the belts and the Fates.

THE CAR.

The car!

The car is an amazement.

The car is perfect.

Five decades ago it was on the leading edge of automotive technology. Today, it's a museum piece. It looks now as it did then, a long, low blade of deepest blue. To run your hand over it is to understand its purpose. When Danny Thompson runs his hand over it, he understands his own.

The car is 32 feet long. Twenty-seven inches high at the tip and 37 inches at the cockpit canopy. It is 34 inches wide. Fueled, it weighs 5,700 pounds. The engines are dry blocks, so the cooling is done by the fuel. Almost every part of the car is hand-built and custom-made. The fuel lines are as complicated as a circulatory system. A single run gulps down 50 gallons of an 87 percent nitromethane, 13 percent methanol fuel blend. The car's weight drops by about 500 pounds over the course of a single one-way pass. The car is now powered by a pair of Hemi V8 engines built by Richard Catton. Horsepower has more than doubled, to 3,000 per engine. Twin three-speed gearboxes link the two engines. The car does not have computerized traction control. “It has Danny control,” Danny says.

Each engine drives one set of wheels. The front engine is mounted backward in the chassis. The only way to stop a car this fast is dual parachutes. The car is also equipped with carbon ceramic disc brakes, but you’d burn them up without the parachute assist.

When Mickey Thompson built the car in 1968, *Sports Illustrated* called it “a rolling textbook in sophisticated automotive design.” When his son finished rebuilding it 50 years later, he saw and felt his father in every part. The same chassis, the same aerodynamics, and the same hand-formed aluminum skin on the car’s featherweight body.

And here’s my favorite note from the Thompson LSR tech web page:

“The tires are a prototype nylon weave backed with banded steel. There is only 1/32 of an inch of rubber. Any more would spin off due to heat and expansion. They are custom made by Mickey Thompson Tires.”

> “OH NOW YOU HAVE CLOSURE. NO. CLOSURE WOULD BE ***MY DAD SITTING THERE*** INSTEAD OF YOU.”

Remaking and reimagining the car took nearly a decade and every nickel Danny and his wife, Valerie, had.

Built in 1968 by the father, rebuilt for 2018 by the son.

Danny paints it blue, hitches up the trailer and heads for Utah. His crew has to push Danny down into the seat like a jack-in-the-box. Danny calls it *Challenger 2*.

THIS IS DANNY THOMPSON in the *Bonneville Racing News*, Issue 192.

> *The starter gives us the go signal and I feel the push truck touch the car. I release the brake and apply some throttle, the truck pushes me up to only 10-15 miles an hour, the clutches engage and the car pulls away in first gear. There is always a lot of exhaust and mechanical noise in the car and I can hear or sense it through my earplugs and helmet. The car is pretty heavy at 5200 lbs. and I accelerate as hard as possible, sensing wheel slip and modulating the throttle. I don’t want to burn up the expensive Mickey Thompson tires with too much wheel spin—their treads are very thin!*
>
> *Down the course I go, faster and faster. At about 270 mph, I’m at redline. We use about 6900 rpm since these A Fuel engines have such enormous torque, there is no reason for more. I have a red light to signal me to shift, and then I touch the air-shifter button on the steering wheel and both gearboxes shift perfectly at whatever amount of throttle I’m using, according to traction and wheel slip conditions. I continue in second gear, faster and faster, the course is flying past. At about 350 miles per hour I’m at the top of second gear and button the air shifter again to get high gear. On we go to whatever speed we can get by the end of the five-mile SCTA course! After I clear the course, I shut the fuel off to kill the engines and pop the safety chute to slow the car down as quickly as possible, since the hand brake shouldn’t be used until we get down to about 175 mph. But I don’t normally need to use it until I almost stop. All four wheels have powerful carbon-carbon disc brakes, and in an emergency chute failure I could use them at higher speed, at the cost of eating up the pads and then discs.*

IN THE VIDEO of the record run you can watch Danny Thompson save his own life when the car gets sideways at about 400 mph. He recovers it by steering calmly into the skid—slow hands, just like a driver’s ed film—then saves it again by correcting back the other way. Turn up the audio and you’ll hear the wheel slip, too. He’s skating on the salt in a 6,000-horsepower missile, feathering the throttle and hands light on the yoke, the earth and sky rushing up at him, the whole world a blur but somehow known in every vector and direction through the seat of the pants, acceleration and yaw and thrust calculated and recalculated without conscious thought in the racer brain, input and output unthinking and instantaneous. A gesture as pure as any ever made by a Zen master.

Cars like the *Challenger 2* and the other Salt Flats piston-driven streamliners are curiosities now, artifacts, the last stand of an ancient world, the end of all that antique fire and thunder. As much art as archaeology.

Danny’s two-way record in the resurrected *Challenger 2* stands at 448.757 mph. The current Outright World Land Speed Record was set more than 20 years ago by a British turbofan twin jet-powered car, the ThrustSSC: 763.035 mph. Faster than the speed of sound. But Danny Thompson has the fastest piston-driven car in history, just the way his father wanted it.

EVEN HERE AT BONNEVILLE, though, on what looks like the threshold of heaven, there’s no such thing as universal justice. Danny scoffs.

“I wanted to kill the guy myself. That wasn’t going to bring my dad back. So even when the guy went to jail and everybody said—what do they call it—oh now you have closure. No. Closure would be my dad sitting there instead of you. You know that would be closure. So it didn’t bring any closure at all.”

Sometimes mythology lets us down. There’s no vengeance, no final celestial reckoning, no kingdom of the absolute. No peace. Instead there’s this. Another photograph. It’s a snapshot of Danny Thompson and that dazzling car under a high azure sky. Right after the record run. He’s smiling. Tired but radiant, that boy’s face grown old is grown young again with a look of something even deeper than relief. He’s done what he came here to do, what he was sent here for.

He’s been set free. ◆

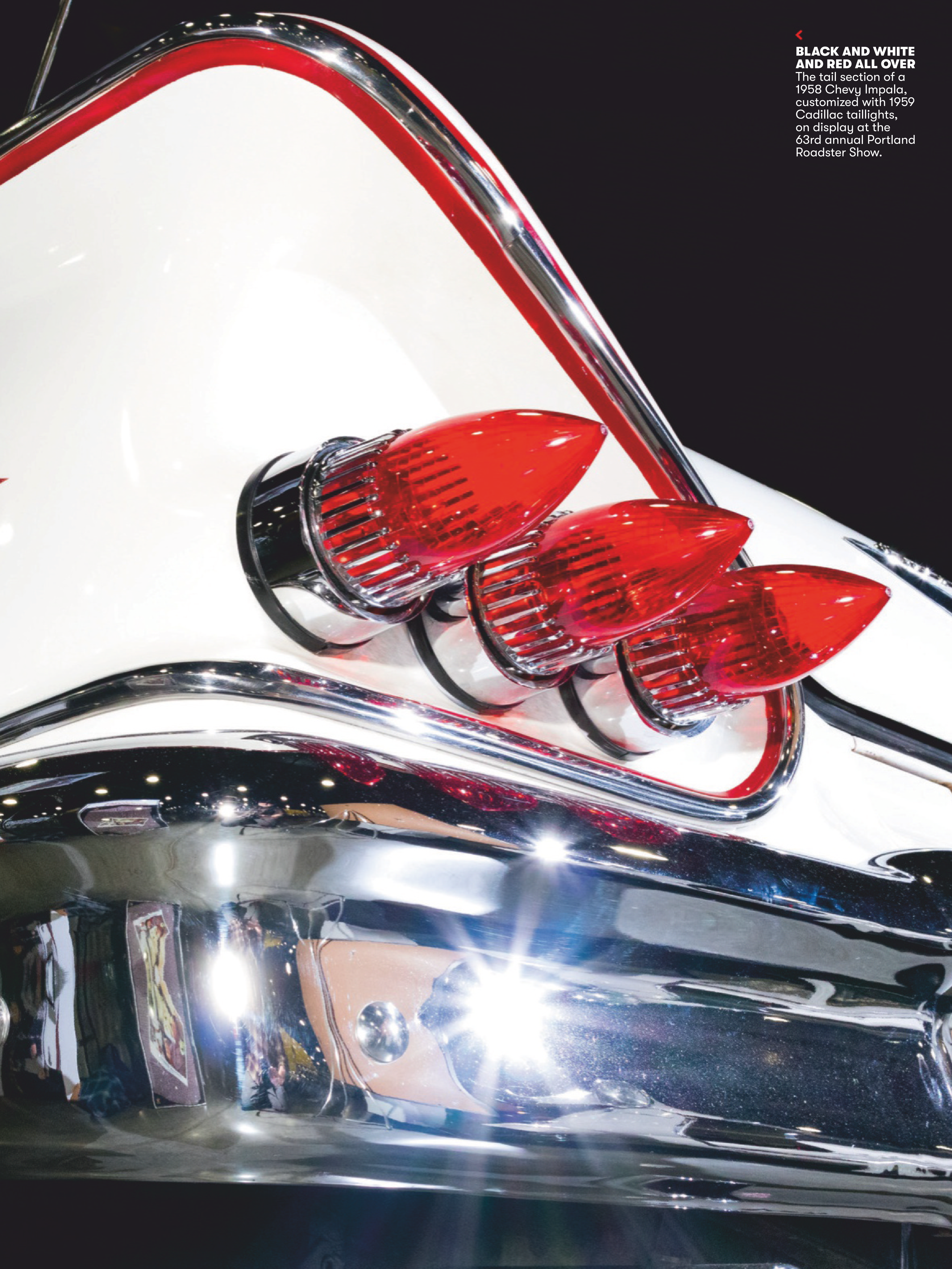
In his workshop, Danny Thompson dreams of the next breakthrough: building a new twin-engine, high-compression superfueled racer.

THE CHROME JEWELS

FROM HOT RODS TO LOWRIDERS, TODAY'S SHOW-CAR ROYALTY REINVENTS THE WHEEL

photographs by **ROBBIE McCLARAN**

text by CHRIS BODENNER



BLACK AND WHITE AND RED ALL OVER The tail section of a 1958 Chevy Impala, customized with 1959 Cadillac taillights, on display at the 63rd annual Portland Roadster Show.

“RODS AND CUSTOMS HELPED TEENS POSITION THEMSELVES AGAINST THE PERCEIVED CONFORMITY OF THE TIMES.”

THIS IS OUR SUNDAY CHURCH,” says Devin Hosking, a bearded host at Portland, Oregon’s Red Door Meet, a weekly cavalcade of car enthusiasts that has nearly 18,000 followers on Facebook. It’s a cold, rainy day in April, but hundreds of people, mostly in their teens and 20s, descend on a five-block stretch of warehouses to parade their customized rides: spoilers and skirts for better aerodynamics, eye-popping paint jobs, revved engines flaunting added horsepower.

A regular named Matty with a souped-up Subaru tells me there’s a social premium on “built not bought,” so most of these youngsters do their own modifications. “You don’t have to have a nice car,” Hosking says of the open spirit of Red Door Meet, “but you have to care about the culture.”

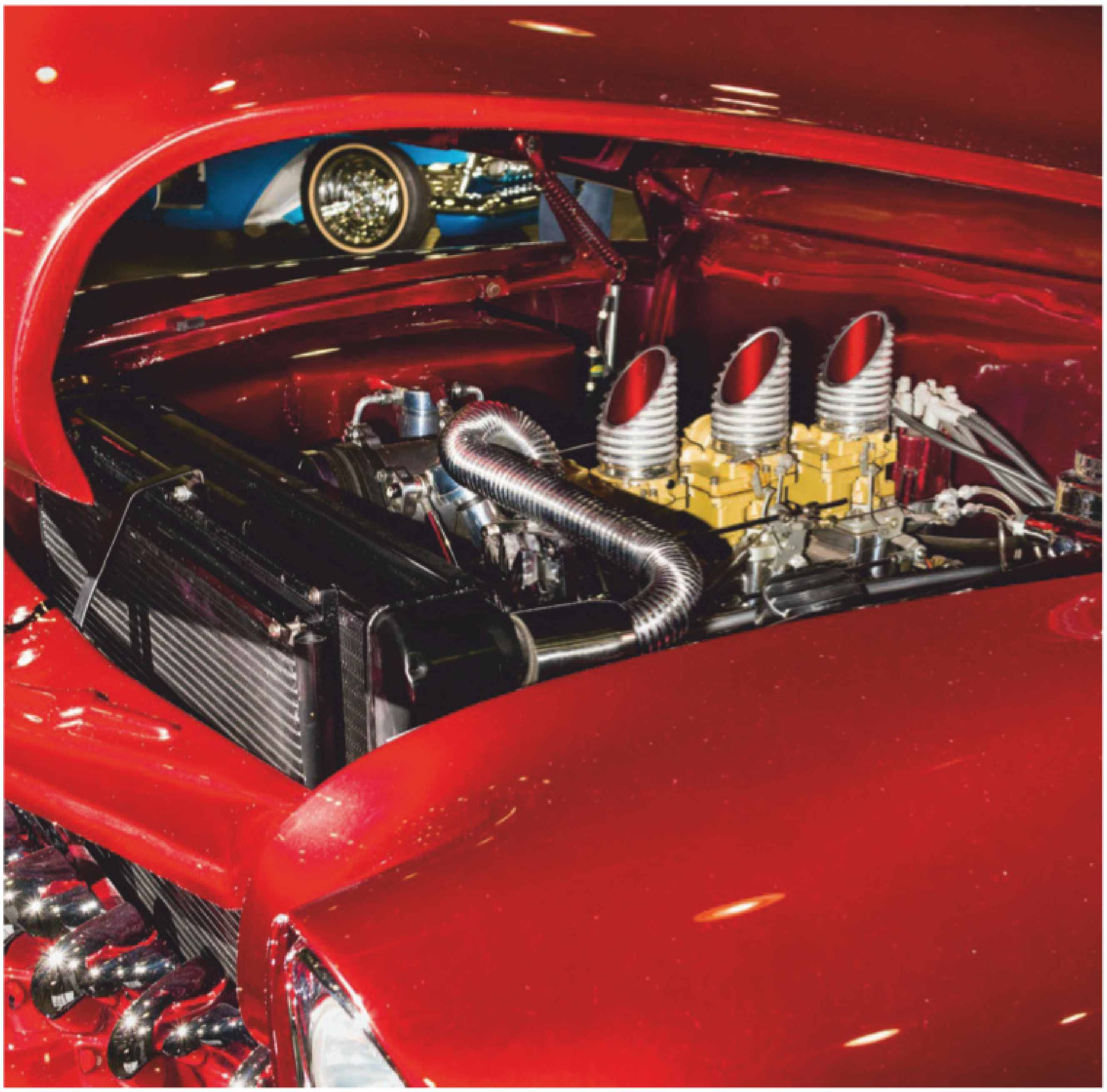
Custom car culture goes back to the Great Depression, when working-class teens started drag racing on the California salt flats. The racers bought cheap Model T’s and Model A’s, stripped them of unnecessary weight—fenders, bumpers, even front brakes—and hopped up the engines, or swapped them out. Enthusiasm for these “hot rods” spread during World War II, when recruits from California described them to soldiers from other states.

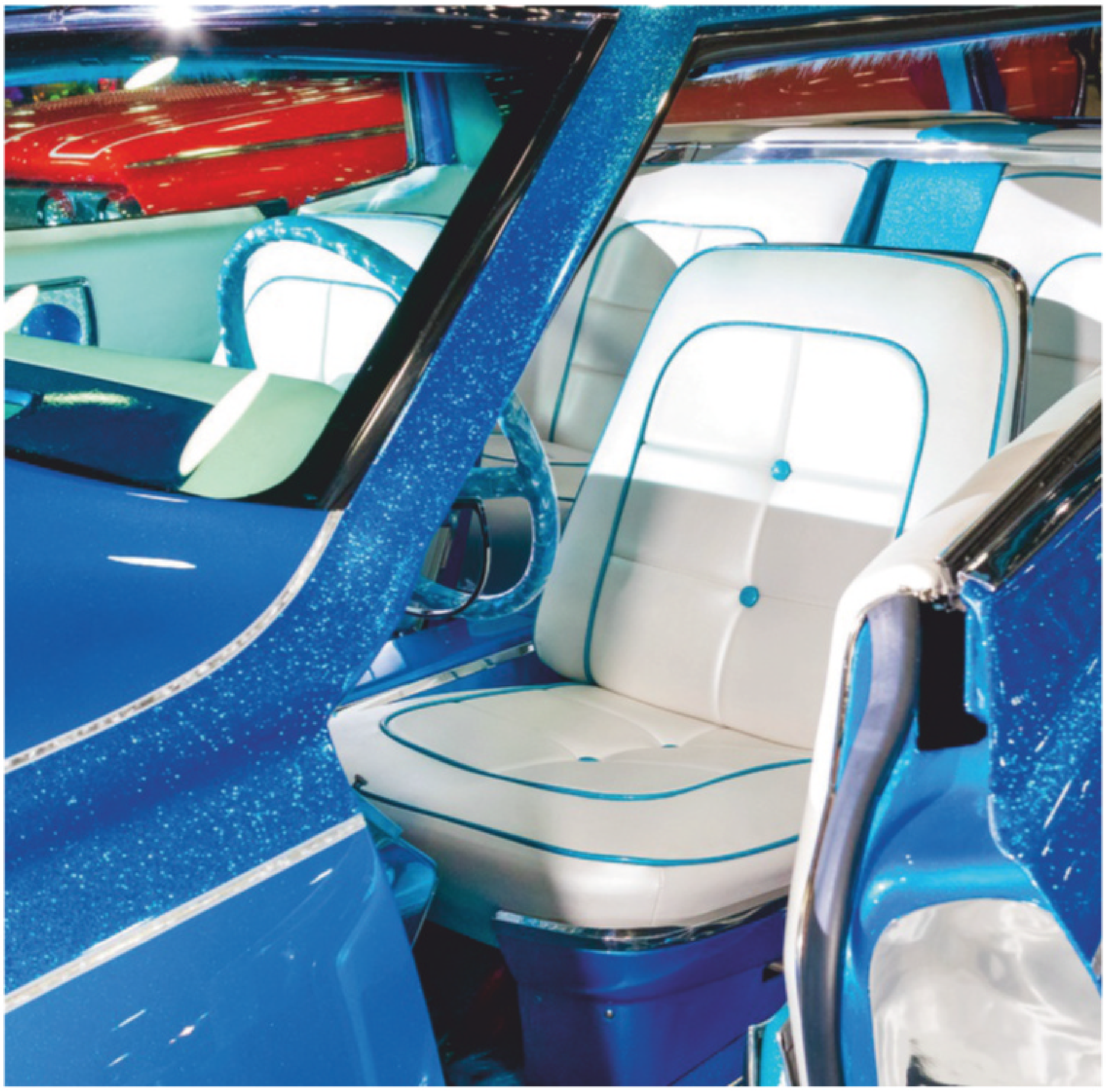
As the first generation of rodders started families and gave up the dangers of the race, some shifted their talents to bodywork. Armed with welding tools, they “chopped” and “channeled” brand-new Chevys and Mercurys—shrinking the tops and lowering the bodies—then “shaved” off exterior parts like chrome trim, emblems and door handles. These sculpted changes gave the new “customs” (often spelled “kustoms”) a distinctive look: sleek,

‹

MATCHY MATCHY

A visitor peers inside a 1939 Lincoln Zephyr with a chopped roof and extended fenders. The car’s owner calls it “a unique rolling piece of art.”





AS GOOD AS GLITTER
A 1967 Thunderbird merged with an Oldsmobile Vista Cruiser station wagon. The car was known as the "Moody Blue" when it debuted in the early 1970s. A new owner recently restored it and renamed it "George," in honor of the legendary car customizer George Barris.

RETRO RAINBOW
A colorful array of car details including (top left) velocity stacks on a red 1950 Mercury; (top center) a three-tone gold exterior on a 1960 Oldsmobile; (bottom left) a TV built into the dashboard of a green 1956 Mercury; and (bottom right) a sleek deco front grill on a 1939 Zephyr.

streamlined, even sinister. These cars were designed for show, not for speed. As the custom car enthusiast and author Pat Ganahl put it, "Hot rods raced, customs cruised."

Teenagers of the 1950s couldn't get enough of them. "Rods and customs helped teens position themselves against the perceived conformity of the times," John DeWitt writes in *Cool Cars, High Art: The Rise of Kustom Kulture*. As parents bought cars straight from the showroom, their sons embraced innovations in paint—candy colors, metal flakes, pinstripes, flames—and gave their cars unique names, such as "Beatnik Bandit," "Fantom Ford," and the "Hirohata Merc," which is often listed as the most famous custom car of all time.

The rockabilly style of that era is still on display at the Portland Roadster Show, an annual tradition since 1956. Many participants today show up with greased hair, black leather jackets and vintage dresses (albeit with more tattoos than their '50s counterparts). The star of this year's show was a crimson 1963 Impala covered in chrome and gold-plating that looked like it belonged in the Palace of Versailles. It was a "lowrider," a style popularized in the 1970s by Latinos in Los Angeles,

BLASTS FROM THE PAST
Above: A 1932 Ford Roadster customized with hand-carved myrtle wood. Right: Visitors roam the Portland show wearing vintage fashions from the Washington State boutique BelAir Betties.

who took the tradition of “channeling” to a flamboyant extreme, using hydraulics to adjust the car’s height and enable bouncing. “I’ve never seen a lowrider in my life with this much engraving,” the famed customizer John D’Agostino said about the half-million-dollar car.

A humbler crowd favorite was a 1946 International Harvester called “Heeler Hell,” festooned with skulls and intricate woodcarvings created by the owner’s son, who is autistic. Its rusted, unfinished look and exaggerated features were typical of the “rat rod”—a style that emerged in the late 1980s as a revolt against the fancy kustoms that nostalgic baby boomers were buying. One of Portland’s most famous kustoms is “Ratty Caddy,” a menacing ’64 Cadillac decorated with macabre signs, decrepit plush animals and an engine resembling a pipe organ. “I don’t think we allow such cars in buttoned-down Connecticut,” a fan remarked online.

A popular hunting ground for customizers is the annual Portland Swap Meet, the largest event of its kind on the West Coast. Walking through the meet in April was overwhelming: More than 3,500 booths coiled for miles, offering hubcaps, headlights, bumpers, decals and countless other components. Some hawked custom services. One mini-junkyard was labeled “Rat Rod Heaven.” The participants were much older and less diverse than those at the youthful Red Door Meet, but just as friendly. “If you ask one question, you’re committed to a

FUEL INJECTION

"ROUND-UP IS LIKE WATCHING HISTORY DRIVE BY."

whole conversation," said my stepfather, who was looking for fog lights for a 1948 Kenworth he'd restored. (My dad is an even bigger car fanatic—I once counted 52 vehicles surrounding our old home in Kansas, including 1950s T-Birds and 1960s Mustangs. He now drives a hot-rod golf cart around the Villages, the largest retirement community in Florida.)

At Manly & Sons, my mustachioed barber raved about the Rose City Round-Up, a kustom festival featuring a drive-in theater, rockabilly bands and a flamethrower-exhaust show. At the Round-Up, held at the Portland International Raceway the third weekend of every June, even the trophies are custom made from car parts.

One of the event's organizers, Drew Rosa, found parts at the Portland Swap Meet to build a stroller for his son: It is the spitting image of a 1949 Mercury. The little boy, Cash, cruised the festival in his tiny green car, pausing to let a bystander take his photo or a police dog lick his cheek. "The Round-Up is like watching history drive by," says Rosa, "and seeing kustom kulture live on through another generation." ◆

< ^

ATOMIC-AGE SLEEK
Left: A souped-up red Cadillac and a mint-green Plymouth Valiant. Above: Customizers removed the paint from this 1960 Ford Falcon and outfitted it with faux rivets to make it look like an aircraft.

BOUNTY HUNTERS AND **BIOLOGISTS** WADE DEEP INTO THE EVERGLADES TO WRESTLE WITH THE **INVASION OF GIANT PYTHONS** THREATENING **FLORIDA'S WETLANDS**

by
IAN FRAZIER

hand-lettering by **ANDREA NASCA**

photographs by **GENA STEFFENS**

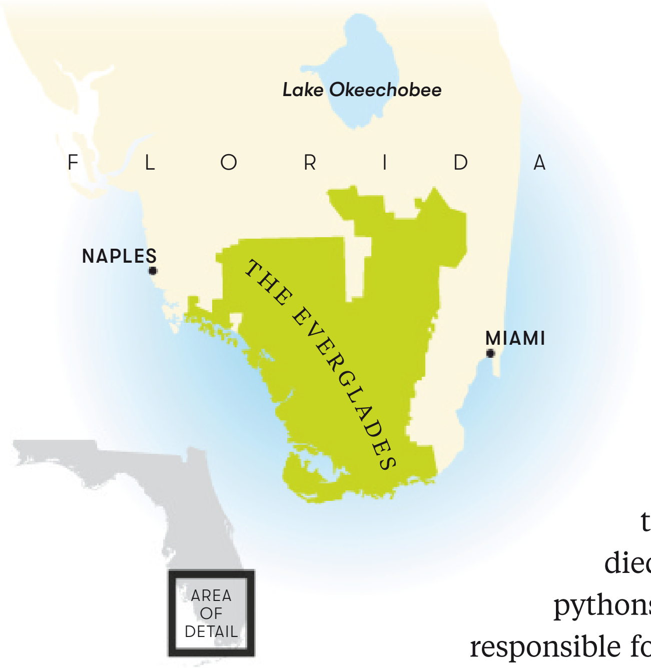
IN THE EVERGLADES, everything still looks the same. The waving saw grass, the cypress and pine trees draped with air plants, the high, white clouds parked like dirigibles above their shadows—if you've been to the Everglades before, and you go back, you'll still find these. But now there is also a weird quiet. In the campsites of Everglades National Park, raccoons don't rattle the trash can lids at four in the morning. Marsh rabbits don't scatter with a nervous rustle on the hiking trails as you walk by. Tires don't shriek when somebody brakes to avoid an opossum transfixed by headlights in the middle of the road. In fact, roadkill, which used to be common in this wildest part of Florida, is no longer seen.

^ As recently as a century ago, the Everglades covered most of the peninsula south of Lake Okeechobee, which was nearly twice its current size.

The raccoons and marsh rabbits and opossums and other small, warmblooded animals are gone, or almost gone, because Burmese pythons seem to have eaten them. The marsh's weird outdoor quiet is the deep, endlessly patient, laser-focused quiet of these invasive predators. About two feet long when hatched, Burmese pythons can grow to 20 feet and 200 pounds; they are among the largest snakes in the world. The pythons are mostly ambush hunters, and constrictors. They kill smaller animals by biting them on or near the head and suffocating them as they are swallowed. Larger animals are seized wherever is convenient, and crushed and strangled in the coils before and during swallowing. Large constrictor snakes have not existed in North America for millions of years. Native wildlife species had never seem them before, and may not recognize them as predators.

In Miami, a center of the exotic pet trade, dealers used to import them from Southeast Asia by the tens of thousands. It is now illegal to import or purchase Burmese pythons in Florida. Probably, at some point, python owners who no longer wanted to care for them let them go in the Everglades.

By the mid-1990s, the pythons had established a breeding population. For 25 years they have been eating any animals they can get their mouths around. Given the extremely stretchy cartilage joint connecting their jaws to their heads and their ability to extend their windpipe, snorkel-like, outside their mouths, so they can breathe while their mouths are entirely oc-



SOURCE: FREEVECTORMAPS.COM

GIVEN THE PYTHONS' MANY **SURVIVAL ADVANTAGES**, THEY WILL **NEVER BE ELIMINATED.**

cupied with swallowing—that's a lot of animals. A 2013 study found that, of a group of marsh rabbits fitted with radio transmitters and released into python territory, 77 percent of those that died within a year had been eaten by pythons. Scientists say that the snakes are responsible for a recent 90 to 99 percent drop in the small mammal population in the national park.

No one knows how many pythons are out there now. Estimates run from 10,000 to perhaps hundreds of thousands. A problem with trying to count them is that they're what scientists call "cryptic"—hard to detect. Their black-brown-tan camouflage fits perfectly in the marsh, as well as in the higher sandy ground that makes up another part of their range. They are good swimmers and can stay underwater for half an hour or more. Frank Mazzotti, a scientist who has been studying them for more than a decade, told me about a time when he and his colleagues caught a python, attached a radio transmitter for research purposes, and released it. “I was holding the back end of the snake, and the front end was in some shallow water,” Mazzotti said. “I looked and looked, but I could not see the front end of a snake that I was holding onto. That’s when I understood that these snakes were amazing—and we were in trouble.”

The Everglades, a vast subtropical wetland, is unlike any other place on earth. It is essentially a wide, shallow, extremely slow-moving river—sometimes called a “river of grass”—that flows from Lake Okeechobee across the southern quarter of the state. North to south it covers more than a hundred miles. Florida’s porous limestone bedrock provides its floor, and the plants that grew and decayed over millennia have laid down layers of peat on top of that. Stretching for more than 50 miles east to west, the Everglades includes saw grass prairie, pine tree-covered ground, small limestone islands, cypress swamps, and mangrove forests along the ocean.

If the Florida peninsula is a thumb, the Everglades are the thumbnail, and the metro areas of Miami in the east and Naples in the west are the cuticles. Millions of people live in the metro areas, right up to the edges of the Everglades, where, by comparison, there’s hardly anyone. Seminole-Miccosukee Indians, whom the U.S. Army failed to dislodge in the 19th century, occupy several reservations in and around the Everglades. Almost nobody else seems to have figured out how to live in the area without damaging it. When feathers were a fashion rage, a hundred years ago and more, hunters killed a huge number of the region’s birds. Then developers drained millions of acres for agriculture, and caused all kinds of problems with runoff, fires and (in annual dry seasons) dust storms. Sugar cane and other farming led to phosphate pollution, which changed the region’s flora. In the 1970s, it became obvious that environmental degradation of the Everglades threatened South Florida’s water supply, and might eventually make the metro areas unlivable. State and federal agencies enacted large-scale measures, still in progress, to try to improve the situation. Burmese pythons are simply the latest in a series of environmental nightmares we’ve inflicted on the Everglades.

◆

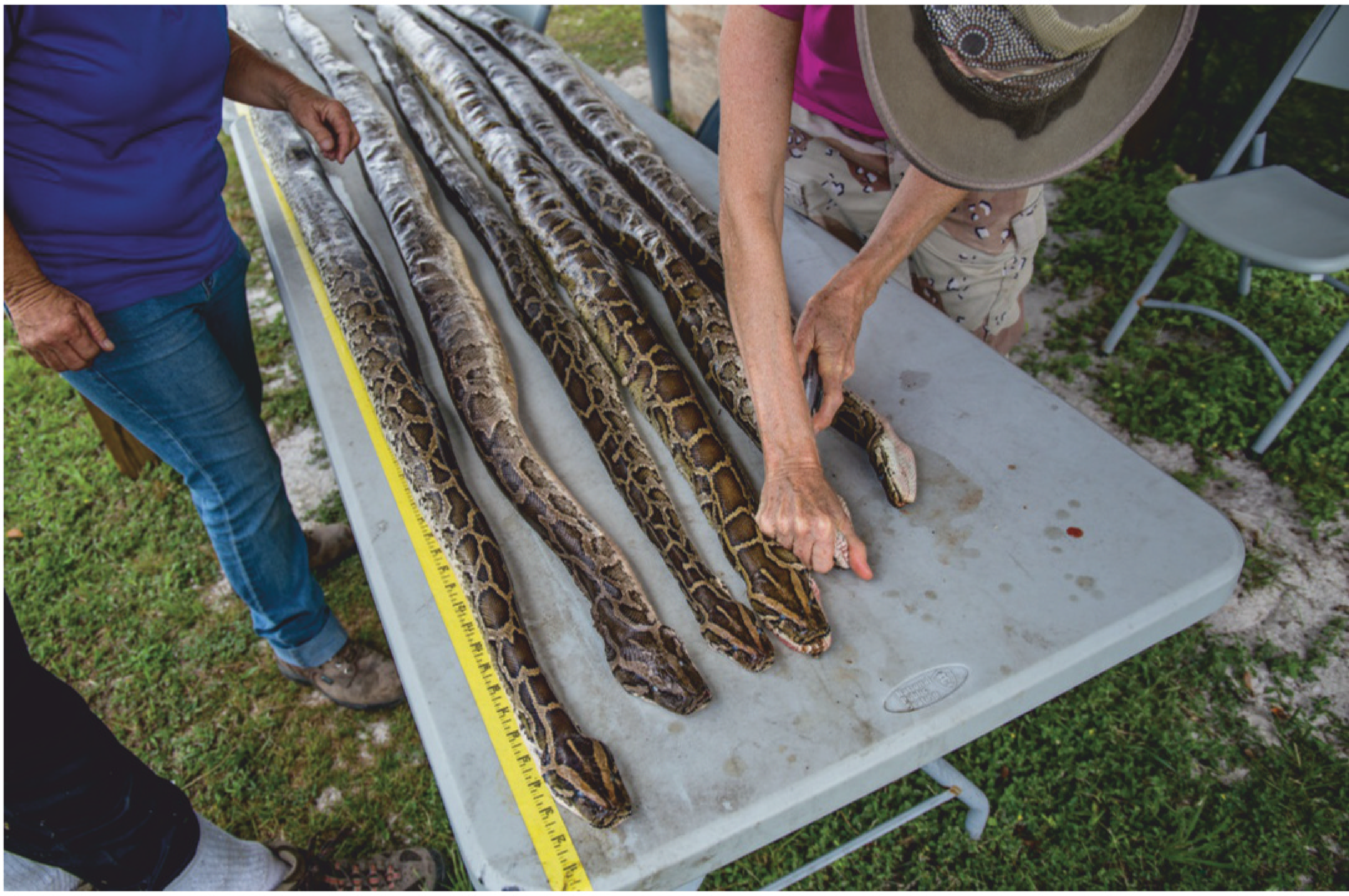
SNAKES, IN GENERAL, tend to freak people out. Scientists who work with snakes get tired of people who say how much they hate them. But snakes aren’t crazy about people, either. A python’s typical reaction to a human being is to hide or try to get away. As I’ve thought about and observed pythons, I remembered a definition I read somewhere: “Man is a creature of meaningful intentions.” That is true of other living things, especially pythons. They are meaningful intention made flesh, going about their business, doing what they evolved to do. That they happened to fall into an environment ideally suited to them is our fault, not theirs.

All the same, they really should not be here. We Americans can’t agree on much, but most Floridians agree that having large invasive snakes eating up the native wildlife is not a good thing. Given the pythons’ many survival advantages, they will never be eliminated. Today the objective is containment and control.

Ian Bartoszek, a compact, muscular, dark-haired 42-year-old wildlife biologist, lives in Naples and works for the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. Bartoszek has single-handedly caught Burmese pythons that are two and three times as long as he is tall. At the Naples Botanical Gardens, where he was once called to remove a

Ian Bartoszek and Katie King recapture the 50-pound sentinel snake Johnny, who has led his minders to 18 adult Burmese pythons for removal.

"IF **NOTHING WERE DONE**, THESE PYTHONS COULD CONVERT OUR ENTIRE WILDLIFE BIOMASS **INTO ONE GIANT SNAKE."**



^ Donna Kalil, a contract snake hunter for the state of Florida, makes on incision on recently killed pythons to ensure they won't be recorded more than once.

nine-foot-long python basking on a lawn, the staff refers to him as "the guy who caught the snake with his feet." When he arrived at the scene, the snake had disappeared into a pond. Bartoszek removed his shoes and socks, waded into the pond, felt around with his feet, located the snake, reached under the surface, grabbed it behind the head and brought it out.

The Conservancy of Southwest Florida is a nonprofit scientific organization that has received funding from the U.S. Geological Survey, the Naples Zoo Conservation Fund and private donors. It works to preserve the original local landscape, along with the native wildlife and plants. By doing this it hopes also to strengthen the area's resilience in the new extreme weather of climate change. Bartoszek and the rest of his python team—Ian Easterling, 27, and Katie King, 23, who both have backgrounds in snake biology—study and remove the pythons in order to advance science and stay ahead of the invasion.

One morning in early February the three of them led me into the swamps of greater Naples. For orientation, they first showed me satellite images of the region on a computer screen: urban and suburban development here, corporate vegetable farms there, and wild Everglades country extending southward and eastward almost everywhere else, all of it cupped by the dark blue semicircle of the ocean. Since 2013, the conservancy has been tracking what it calls "sentinel snakes." These are male Burmese pythons in whom radio transmitters have been surgically implanted (placing transmitters outside the body having proved impractical with snakes). The team tracks 23 of these pythons, each signaling at its own radio frequency. Dots on the satellite map indicated where each snake had been heard from last.

Burmese pythons breed between December and March, with February the height of the season. By following the sentinel males, the scientists find breeding females, as well as other males in the females' company. Removing the females with their eggs—sometimes as many as 60 or even 100-plus eggs per female—is the population-controlling goal. The nonsentinel males are culled, too (or kept and made into sentinels). We parked on a gravel road and plunged into unstable grassy tufts and chest-high forests of saw palmetto whose big, open-handed leaves sounded like cardboard scraping as we pushed through. Bartoszek held up a radio antenna shaped like a horizontal football goal post and listened for beeps. Each sentinel snake has been given a name.

> Katie King, of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, releases new sentinel snakes Dylan and Cash at the spot where they were caught in early 2019.

"That's Kirkland," Bartoszek said, studying the receiver's dial as the first beeps got louder. Then he heard other beeps. "And that's Malcolm," he said. "They're close to each other. That means the girl they're after must be nearby."

The beeps led us into sinkhole country, where we waded up to our pants pockets in swamp water, pulling our booted feet out of gripping muck. Saw grass is pretty, but you can't grab onto it, because it lacerates your hand. Abundant common reeds, which narrow to an eye-poking point at their tip, are similarly unhelpful. Brazilian peppertrees, an invader that is among Florida's most damaging flora, also impeded us; they had been sprayed in an attempt to get rid of them, and thorny vines had taken over their dead branches. The vines dangled and ripped at us. Bartoszek chopped at them with his machete.

The beeps coming from Kirkland got so loud that we had to be right on top of him, Bartoszek said. He went ahead by inches, bent over and scanning the swampy, brushy ground. Then suddenly he stood up and said, "Wow! I've never seen that before!" Right in front of him, Kirkland had stretched out his entire 13-foot length along a horizontal branch of a mangrove tree, just above eye level. Another few steps and we would have brushed right under him.

The biologist detoured around the tree and searched in waist-deep water on the other side for Kirkland's female. I moved closer to the snake. In the confusion of leaves and branches, sunlight and shadow, I could hardly make him out. Slowly I approached his head. He did not spook but stayed still. A tiny motion: The tongue flicked out. Like all snakes' tongues, it was forked; the organ's double-sidedness helps it determine which direction the molecules it detects are coming from. When the tongue is withdrawn, it touches a sensory node on the roof of the mouth that analyzes the information. Its prominent nostrils resemble retractable headlights; heat-sensing receptors below them enable it to key in on the body temperatures of its mostly warmblooded prey. The small, beadlike eyes were watching, steadily.

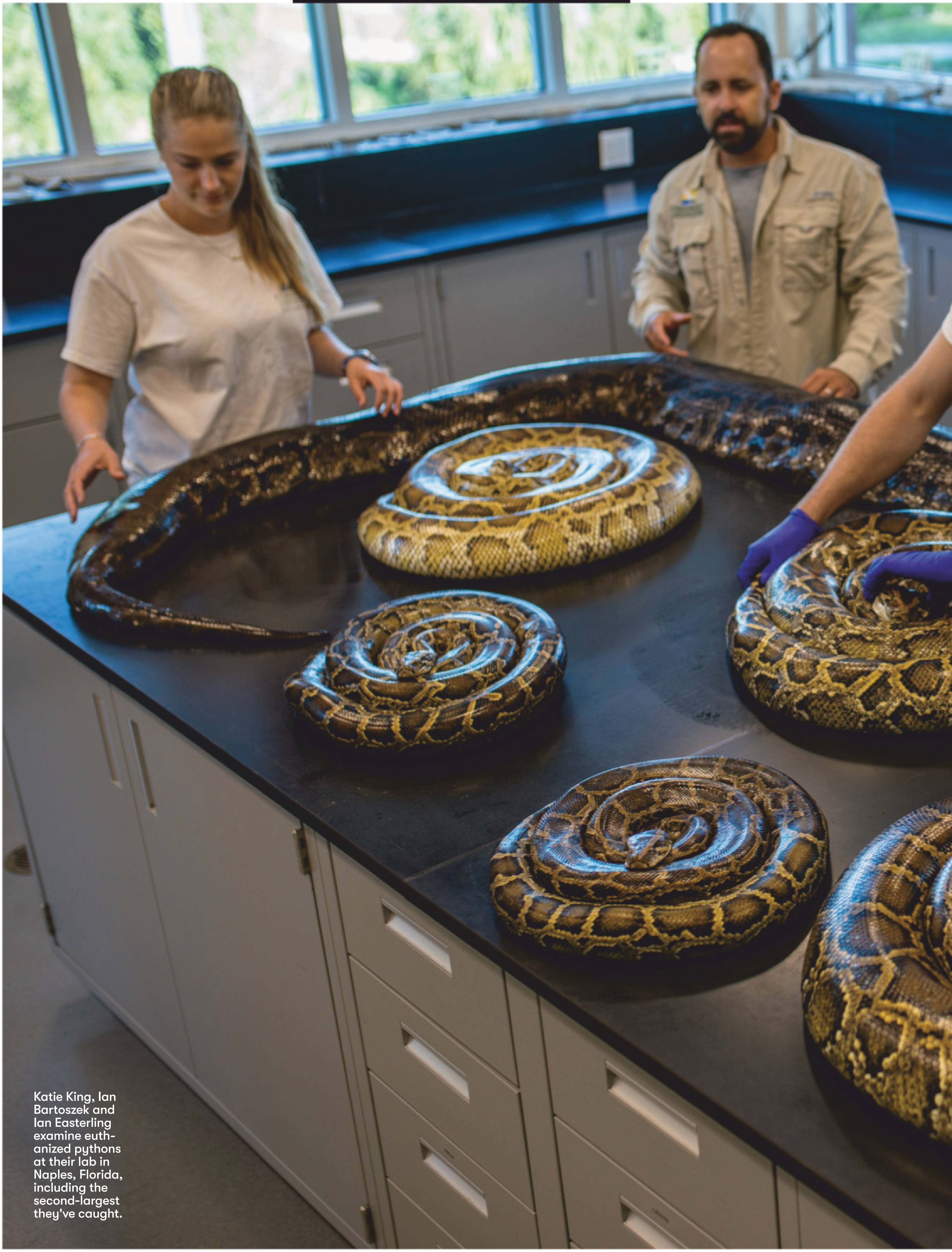
No female could be found, nor could Malcolm, the other sentinel nearby. The team agreed that both he and the female had probably gone underwater. In the muck, Bartoszek's feet felt nothing snaky. So, leaving Kirkland in the tree, we bushwhacked back out. The half-mile we covered, round-trip, took about an hour and a half.

It felt strange to be back so suddenly in Naples traffic on vast expanses of pavement filled with cars. The city's population explodes with snowbirds this time of year. Listening to the receiver in the truck and on foot, Bartoszek and his colleagues homed in on other sentinels—snakes named Severus, Shrek, Quatro, Stan Lee, Elvis, Harriet, Donnie Darko, Luther and Ender. We battled into the bush to find some of them. Quatro had buried himself in a mass of para grass right next to a housing development and a golf course. The para grass was so thick you could stand on it as if on a mattress. Following the beeps, the scientists parted dense greenery, layer after layer, until they saw the shiny, patterned hide of the huge animal coiled below.

In a sandy environment nearer the ocean, Luther, at 12 feet long, had bunched up into what Bartoszek called "a tight top-hat coil" that looked like a cabbage palm stump. Ian Easterling spotted him, having been fooled by this snake before. "Luther is a *really* good hider," Easterling said. Suddenly a hair-raising rattling came from an Eastern diamondback rattlesnake on the ground a few feet away. Katie King, whose specialty is rattlesnakes, reacted ecstatically. Her eyes were like a happy kid's as she exclaimed over how beautiful the diamondback was.

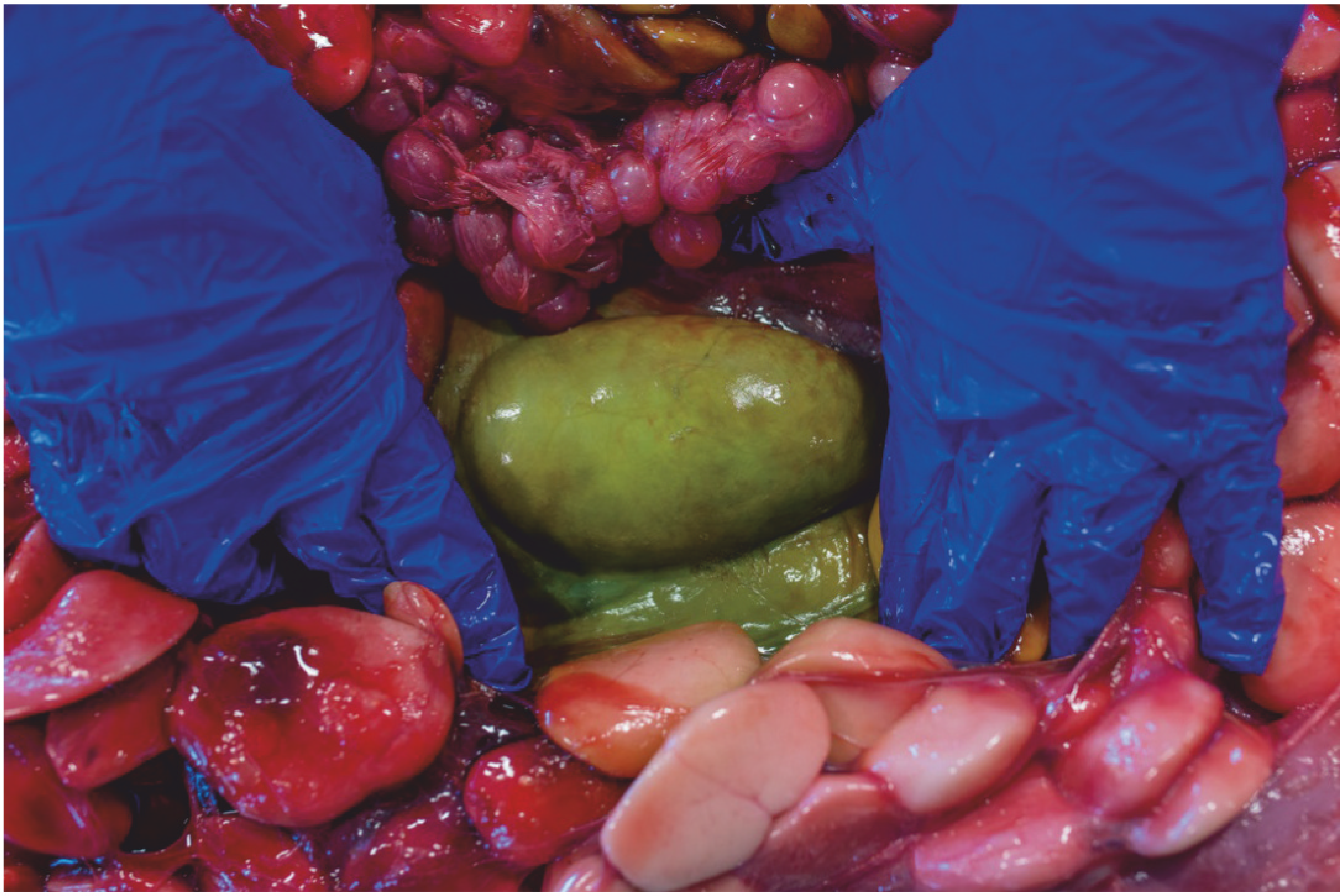
Meanwhile, Bartoszek had located Luther's sometime consort, Harriet—one of two transmitter-bearing females the team follows, to learn more about the behavior of female pythons. She had sheltered in a nearby gopher tortoise burrow. Bartoszek put a flexible tube with a camera at its end down the burrow to see if any other snakes were with her. The large, coiled-up snake was alone and stared into the lens, irate. Once, in a similar burrow, he found what's called a "breeding ball" of pythons. It included a 14-foot-long female and six males. "We were catching snakes so fast, each of us had one in each hand, and I was standing on the others so they couldn't get away," Bartoszek said.

The snakes cross boundary lines, so Bartoszek and company do, too. Getting access to state and federal lands, acreage owned by private developers, and dirt tracks through horizon-spanning vegetable farms requires diplomacy, which is a big part of Bartoszek's job. Tracking Stan Lee, a sentinel who



Katie King, Ian Bartoszek and Ian Easterling examine euthanized pythons at their lab in Naples, Florida, including the second-largest they've caught.

CREDIT TK HERE



Katie King reveals the undeveloped eggs (top center), gall bladder (center) and fat bodies (bottom) of a euthanized python during a necropsy.

Snake hunters and biologists have found remains from dozens of animal species inside pythons, such as bird feathers and bobcat claws (shown here).

had recently wandered into a farm, Bartoszek got a cheerful wave-through from a farm supervisor. Stan Lee's beeps came from a marsh beyond long rows of vegetable crops. The snake had last been spotted on the other side of a field of farm equipment. In all likelihood, he had found his way through that field during the last 24 hours, winding among harvesters, gang plows and fertilizer sprayers.

* * *

ACCORDING TO UNIVERSALLY known cop lore, undercover police are arrested with the criminals they've been investigating, so as not to blow their cover. Not so with sentinel snakes, who are left to identify more targets. The other pythons out there never seem to suspect. Elvis, the longest-surviving sentinel, who is also the longest continuously tracked Burmese python in the world (since 2013), has led the team to 17 other pythons, and has been recaught numerous times to have his transmitter's battery replaced.

At the conservancy's science lab, a veterinarian euthanizes the captured nonsentinel snakes with an injection of a drug approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Then the snakes go into a freezer for future study. (Later they are incinerated so that nothing ingests the euthanizing chemicals.) One morning Bartoszek invited me to a necropsy of a python the team had captured three weeks before. The snake, a 13-foot, 80-pound female, was in the final thawing stage, piled in coils in and around a metal sink. When I walked in, Bartoszek said, "Twelve thousand five hundred pounds of Burmese pythons have come through that door in the last six years. And we caught all of them within 55 square miles around Naples. The Everglades ecosystem is about 5,000 square miles. Consider that fact when you're wondering how many pythons might be in the Everglades."

Easterling and King stretched the python belly-up on the long, marble-topped dissection table. Bartoszek went on, "It is possible that a Burmese python converts about half of the weight of the animals it consumes into its own body mass. So that 12,500 pounds of snake could represent 25,000 pounds of native wildlife—12 ½ tons of animals and birds taken out of the Southwest Florida ecosystem. If nothing were done about these pythons, they could eventually convert our entire wildlife biomass into one giant snake."

With a scalpel, Easterling began to slit the snake's belly, starting just below the chin. He showed me the tongue, a tiny strand of tissue that hardly looked substantial enough to possess such sensitivity. The teeth were horror-movie sharp, and numerous, and they curved inward. Bartoszek and Easterling—and, in fact, most of the people I met who work with pythons in Florida—have been bitten, and the points of python teeth often remain in their fingers, palms or wrists. (Luckily, pythons are not venomous.) As Easterling continued cutting toward the tail and peeling back the hide, the exposed muscle gleamed like pale and massive filet mignon.

The fat tissue resembled marshmallows or balls of mozzarella in bags of clear membrane. This snake, like many pythons caught by the team, had fattened on potentially hundreds of animals until it was bulky in the middle. “We’ve seen pythons so fat that they wobble as they go along the ground,” Easterling said. The long, narrow lungs extended down both sides of the snake. About three-quarters of the way toward the tail, on either side of the cloaca (the single opening for the intestinal, urinary and genital tracts), pythons have small vestigial appendages called spurs. The spurs of males are longer than those of females and provide a quick means of identifying the sex. Back in the mists of evolution, the spurs were legs, and pythons’ ancestors walked on all fours.

Easterling made a rectangular cut in the muscle and removed a small section to send for analysis of its mercury content. Like other apex predators, pythons accumulate toxins in their tissues from what they eat, and a sample can suggest the level of mercury contamination in the environment. He also swabbed the skin to take samples that would be sent to a lab working on experiments with pheromones as lures for monitoring and trapping pythons. Then he removed the eggs, which were about the size of chicken eggs, and leathery. There were 43 of them. Most important, Easterling checked the contents of the digestive tract; he found nothing. (Pythons can go for up to a year without eating.)

Often, undigested animal parts show up: alligator claws, bird feathers (the remains of 37 bird species have been found in pythons’ stomachs), snail shells (probably eaten by prey, because the snakes are not known to eat snails), bobcat claws (larger and solider versions of the claw casings left by cats on a rug) and sometimes the remains of other snakes. Bartoszek brought out a plastic container of hoof cores from white-tailed deer he had found in pythons. Now that the snakes have devastated the population of smaller mammals, they appear to be moving to larger ones. On his computer he called up pictures he had taken last year of a python in the process of swallowing a fawn. “The python weighed 31 pounds, the fawn weighed 35,” he said. “That is, the deer weighed 113 percent as much as the python that was eating it. We believe this is the largest prey-to-Burmese python ratio ever recorded.”

On an extra-large computer screen overlooking the lab, Bartoszek showed me data points by the hundreds: the current locations of all the sentinel snakes, the sex-seeking routes they had taken during the past weeks, the places where the team had recently captured females, the captures by month during the previous year, the first capture the team ever made, the farthest distance a sentinel is known to have traveled—and more. Were it not for the data Bartoszek’s team has paid for with the sweatiest and swampiest of sweat equity, these cryptic snakes would still be living secret lives in the wilderness, perhaps just across the street. As I left, Bartoszek told me, “We are learning things about Burmese pythons that nobody else on the planet knows.”

> “WE ARE **LEARNING THINGS** ABOUT BURMESE PYTHONS THAT **NOBODY ELSE ON THE PLANET** KNOWS.”

◆

I LEFT NAPLES and drove eastward across the Everglades. Traffic thronged on Highway 41, the Tamiami Trail. I was headed, eventually, for West Palm Beach, in the northern reaches of Miami, and the headquarters of the South Florida Water Management District, or SFWMD. The Everglades fall under the jurisdiction of various bureaucracies, some of which overlap: the federal government, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Seminole and Miccosukee Indian tribes, and the SFWMD. In Naples, Bartoszek’s program is mostly privately funded, high-tech and staffed by three people. In the rest of South Florida, the money for python removal is public (or tribal), the number of staff is greater and the emphasis is more on the human factor. In other words, a lot of people just want to go out into the 'Glades and catch some pythons, and these organizations pay them to do that.

The SFWMD, often referred to simply as "the district," oversees water resources in the southern half of the state, which makes it the most powerful local agency fighting the problem. Since March 2017, its contract hunters have removed more than 2,000 pythons, or more than two and a half miles and 12 tons of snake.

The district's headquarters occupy a landscaped campus with fountains and a creek. There I met with Rory Feeney, the district's land resources bureau chief; Amy Peters, its geospatial specialist, who handles its python data; and Mike Kirkland, who runs the Python Elimination Program. They told me that the district is the largest landowner in Florida, that the entire Everglades have been undergoing a $10 billion, 35-year reclamation project, that it's the largest such project ever attempted in the United States, and that if, when it's finished, the pythons have eaten all the Everglades' birds and mammals, it will be an unmitigated disaster.

The fact that Mike Kirkland has the same name as one of Bartoszek's sentinel snakes is only a coincidence. Kirkland, the person, is another dark-haired, compact, intense combat officer in the python wars. He has one degree in biology and another in environmental policy. The skin of a 17-foot, 3-inch python that he caught himself extends across his office wall. The Python Elimination Program's 25 contract hunters report to him. They have his cellphone number and he always answers their calls, which often come late at night, because that's usually the best time for python hunting.

> "PEOPLE DID NOT HAVE **THE NECESSARY MOTIVATION** TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE PYTHONS, UNTIL **IT WAS TOO LATE."**

Kirkland's hunters are an elite. Back in 2013 and again in 2016, the state ran a program called the Python Challenge, which channeled an expressed public wish to help catch pythons. The challenge dispatched hunters into the Everglades by the hundreds—1,500 in 2013, 1,000 in 2016—over a period of several weeks to see what they could do, but the results were disappointing. After that, the district announced it was taking applications to fill 25 full-time paid positions for python hunters. It received 1,000 applications in four days.

Applicants had to show a proven record of success. "Each one has a special gift for seeing snakes," Kirkland said of the hunters who were selected. He went on, "The Everglades are closed off to most vehicle traffic, but they have levees running through them. We give our hunters master keys to the levee gates. There are hundreds of miles of levee roads they can drive. Snakes like to come up on the levees and bask. The hunters cruise slowly and look for them out the windows, and get cricks in their necks from it. That's how almost all our pythons are caught—hunters driving the levees. The hunters tell us they love the job and it's the best job they ever had. They get $8.46 an hour to hunt for up to ten hours a day, and can continue on their own as long as they want after that. We also pay a bonus of $50 per snake, and $25 for every foot of length beyond four feet. Of course, sometimes most of their pay goes for gas money."

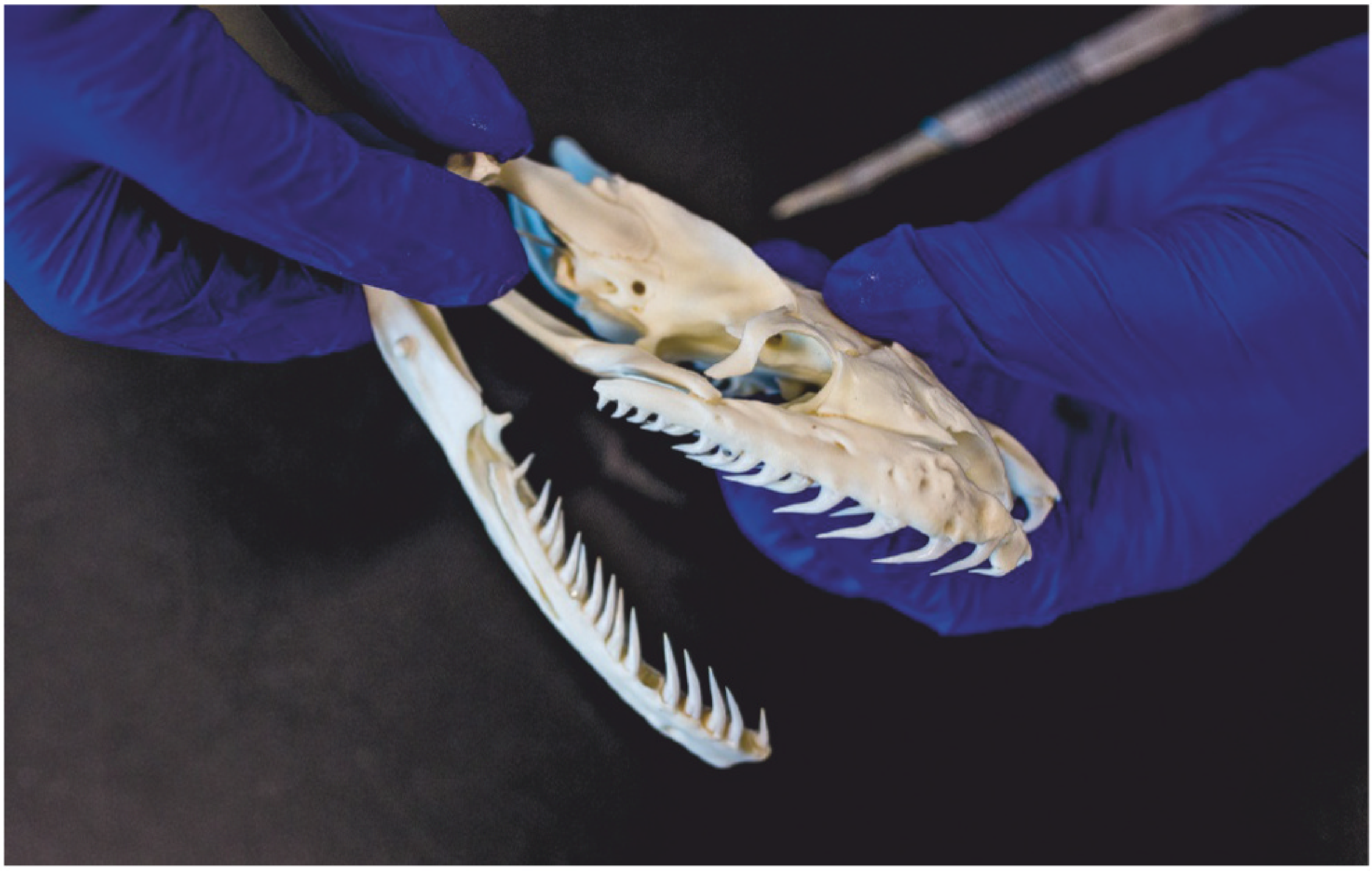
The hunters kill the snakes with shotguns or pistols, or with bolt guns, devices used in slaughterhouses. Often they keep the skins, which can be sold; the rest they leave for scavengers. Working with other agencies and organizations, the district intends to use every method of catching pythons, including heat-sensor drones, pheromone traps, sentinel snakes and snake-hunting dogs. All have drawbacks: The first two are untried and still in development stage; sentinel snakes would come with a risk of their being caught and killed by people who didn't know they were sentinels; and snake-hunting dogs, which can find pythons more than twice as fast as humans can, are hampered by the heat and the difficulty of the environment. For now, the district will rely on human eyes and hands.

◆

DONNA KALIL, KIRKLAND'S ONLY woman hunter, told me to meet her in the parking lot of the Miccosukee tribal casino at 5:30 on a weekday afternoon. The casino and its attached hotel sit in the marsh at the western edge of greater Miami, where development ends. Beyond the casino to the northwest is nothing but Everglades. Donna's vehicle can be seen easily from a distance because it is a Ford Expedition with a snake-spotting tower on top. She was wearing feathery earrings, a long-sleeved green T-shirt that said "Everglades Avengers Python Elimination Team," and heavy camo pants that were baggy, to give no purchase to a striking snake. Her long, wavy blond hair went almost to her waist. With her were her daughter, Deanna Kalil, who's a lawyer, and their friend, Pat Jensen. "We're on a python-hunting girls' night out," Donna explained.

She drove west on Highway 41, turned off it, went around some hydraulic infrastructure by a canal and opened a levee gate. Donna has caught more than 140 pythons. Before we started she showed me what to look for. Taking off her python-skin belt, she laid it outstretched in some grass. "You see the way the belt kind of shines?" she asked. "The pattern of the snakeskin looks just like the grass, but the difference is that the skin has a shine. The shine is what you're looking for." Then Deanna and I got up in the spotting tower and the truck started rolling along the levee road at a steady 12 miles an hour, with Donna and Pat sticking their heads out the windows on either side.

We drove and we drove—17 miles on one levee, 15 miles on another. Night fell and Donna turned on the truck's banks of high-beams. To the east, the skyline of Miami sparkled dimly. To the west stretched the total black darkness of the marsh. For a while the lights of planes landing at Miami International passed regularly overhead. Once, when Deanna was flying



^ The skull of a Burmese python, which uses needle-sharp, recurved teeth to latch onto prey before wrapping its coils around its victim to kill it.

home from Seattle, her plane crossed the Everglades during daylight and she looked down and saw her mother in the truck driving along a levee.

She and I both held pistol-grip flashlights to point out any snakelike things we saw. I kept calling out to Donna, at the wheel, to stop, because I thought I saw something, but I was always wrong. Soon I got used to the way the shadows of weeds sidled by us as the truck rolled on, and to the dark water suddenly glittering among the grasses, and to the occasional pythonish scraps of PVC pipe. Burrowing owls flared up from the levee sides and flew off, calling. Alligator eyes in the black canals reflected our light back to us like the lantern eyes of demons.

The night got later, and later still. Riding for a while in the cab, I heard some of Donna's snake-hunting stories—about the python she caught that, when she cut it open, had a domestic cat in its stomach, and about the huge python that came at her with fangs bared and she shot it and it got away and it's still out there somewhere ("It's my Moby Dick"), and about the one she caught and then let go of its tail, so she could answer her phone, and in that moment the snake slipped its tail around her neck and started squeezing and would have strangled her if the friend who was riding with her hadn't pried it off. As she talked, sort of out of the side of her mouth, she kept watching and never broke concentration.

At around midnight she returned me to the casino parking lot, with no snakes caught or seen.

* * *

THE NEXT DAY IT RAINED, and the thermometer dropped into the low 60s. I used the opportunity to visit a high-rise building in Davie, Florida, just west of Miami, that's another python command center. First I talked to Melissa Miller, a quiet, gentle-mannered woman who is the interagency python management coordinator for Florida Fish and Wildlife. She has been working with Burmese pythons since before graduate school, and she wrote her PhD dissertation on parasitic wormlike crustaceans called pentastomes, which live in the pythons' lungs. The pentastomes don't seem to slow the pythons down, but they do appear to affect the health of native snakes who have picked them up. Miller keeps track of the python researchers and hunters that various agencies send into the Everglades and how much hunters get paid for hunting where. According to her data, it takes a hunter an average of 19 hours to find a python.

In an office down the hall, I met Jennifer Ketterlin, an invasive species biologist with the National Park Service. She also is gentle, alert and soft-spoken, a manner maybe derived from watching animals in the wild. She described the challenges of working in the Everglades. In many places the marsh's limestone bedrock rises into little tree-covered islands called hammocks. These are refuges where female pythons can hide their eggs and stay with them for two months until they hatch. The hammocks, of which there are thousands, can be miles from anywhere and are often accessible only by boat or helicopter. Sometimes the helicopters can't land; they hover and the scientists jump off. In short, policing the entire Everglades for pythons will never be possible.

On another floor I visited Frank Mazzotti, a professor of wildlife ecology at the University of Florida. He supervises 15 researchers who study the spatial ecology of pythons and other reptiles—that is, where they live and where they go. Python people I had talked to asked me, "Have you met Frank yet?" One of the elders of python studies, he is a tanned, emotive man with a seamed face and a short gray ponytail. "Guys like you get all excited about pythons," he said after I'd introduced myself. "You reporters come down here and the pythons are all you want to talk about. It's just sensationalism." (There is some truth to that. For proof, check out the videos of pythons on YouTube, especially the ones of pythons fighting alligators. Most python coverage plays up their scary side. Still, the videos are pretty cool.)

"What about some of the other invasives, such as the ones that we still have a chance of stopping?" Mazzotti went on. "Like the Argentine black and white tegus, for example. Tegus are lizards that can go into alligator nests and bring out eggs that are bigger than their heads. That's like you carrying a cantaloupe in your mouth. Just a few tegus can wipe out entire alligator colonies in no time. Fortunately, tegus can also be trapped, so maybe we can still contain them. But nobody wants to hear about that. It was the same with the pythons. People did not have the necessary motivation to do anything about them, either, until it was too late."

From there Mazzotti moved on to his general take on Florida's environmental prospects, which he portrayed as dire. Under the current political dispensation more land has been opened to development, more environment-protecting regulations relaxed, more funds cut. As he described it, the influence of real estate and big business in Florida will have a downstream effect that might be of great benefit to pythons, not to mention the tegus.

* * *

YOU CAN ALMOST GET ADDICTED to looking for pythons. On the next sunny day I went out again with Donna Kalil and we covered I don't know how many miles, starting at about 8 in the morning. This time we met up with Ryan Ausburn, a fellow contract hunter, at an airboat dock. He is a big man with blue eyes, many tattoos, and a long, narrow chin-beard going gray at the top. Again, Donna drove. Ryan and I manned the spotting tower and he saw details invisible to me—a new, experimental style of military helicopter flying back and forth on the horizon, a turtle shell the size of a golf ball in the wheel ruts. He told me about his previous job as a security guard in a casino in Hollywood, Florida, where he used to watch a bank of two dozen TV screens of closed-circuit feed all night. "Looking for snakes out here is a hell of a lot more fun than watching TV screens shut up in a room," he said.

We saw more alligators, which splashed enormously and dove into the grasses, and gars finning in the clear pools, and largemouth bass, and egrets, and bitterns, and red-shouldered hawks, and roseate spoonbills, and wood storks (a threatened species, whose remains have been found in python stomachs), and not a single mammal. In puddle-deep tracks next to the levees the endless squiggles of Florida bladderwort, an aquatic plant, kept looking like snakes, and weren't. We saw no snake of any kind all day. My companions were disappointed, but I said that I was a lifelong fisherman and had plenty of experience not catching anything.

As we drove, the sun went from one end of the sky to the other; eventually Donna took Ryan back to his vehicle and returned me to the Miccosukee casino, where I was handed off to two other contract hunters, Geoff and Robbie Roepstorff, a husband-and-wife team in a new Jeep Rubicon. We kept hunting until past midnight, venturing into spookier country south of Highway 41, among moss-hung trees and strange limestone outcroppings. Again we did not see any pythons. Geoff and Robbie are bankers and hunt pro bono, but take the hunting seriously. Our lack of success made them even more downcast than my previous companions were. Geoff kept telling me that I had to come back in August. "The bugs are terrible, but we can guarantee you a python," he said.

Maybe the snakes were in remote places, mating. From Naples, Ian Bartoszek kept sending me photos of the snakes his team was catching. Just after I had left, sentinels led them to an 11-foot, 60-pound female, followed over the next few days by a 12-foot, 70-pounder, a 14-foot, 100-pounder, and a 16-foot, 160-pounder—all females. In April, they caught a 17-footer, weighing 140 pounds and carrying 73 eggs. (Half a dozen smaller males had also been caught.) All the photos showed the hunter-scientists in deep swamps. Before long the team had brought in 2,400 pounds of pythons.

In wider herp circles, talk was of Burmese python exploits the likes of which had never been seen. A recent issue of *Herpetological Review* published two photos of pythons in the Gulf of Mexico, off Florida's southwestern coast. One had been coiled around the buoy of a crab pot; the crab fishermen who captured it took its picture, then chopped it up for bait. The other photo showed a python before capture, just swimming along. What made the photos remarkable was that the first snake was more than 15 miles offshore. The second was about six miles offshore. Burmese pythons have been known to cross expanses of water in Asia, but none had ever been observed that far out at sea.

How the snakes got there remains unknown. Maybe a storm washed them out of a swamp next to the Gulf. The photos renewed the question of how far the pythons are capable of expanding their range. They do well in heat, and 2015 and 2017

Hunters such as Donna Kalil—seen here driving a levee road at dusk, when pythons emerge to bask—have killed more than 2,000 pythons since 2017.

were the first- and second-hottest years in Florida history. As for cold, pythons usually die when temperatures remain under 40 degrees for prolonged periods. During a cold spell in 2010, many pythons and other non-native reptiles throughout South Florida died. The pythons who survived may have taken shelter in the burrows of gopher tortoises or armadillos.

Regarding the possibility of the pythons moving farther north in Florida, Frank Mazzotti told me, “If the climate keeps getting warmer, and enough of them learn to shelter in burrows during cold spells, and they get into that sandy country north of Lake Okeechobee where armadillo and gopher tortoise burrows are more plentiful, then it will be, ‘Katy, bar the door!’”

* * *

ACCORDING TO THE RATIO of 19 hours of hunting for every python caught, I should have caught one and a half pythons while I was out with the hunters. The fact that I did not even see a python would trouble me if I did not regard the hunting itself as a devotional experience. I scanned the passing Everglades until the details of roadside swampland began to go through my mind in my sleep. The hunters and scientists who search for pythons across South Florida are heroes because they spend thousands of hours truly looking at those details, with mindfulness and quickness of eye.

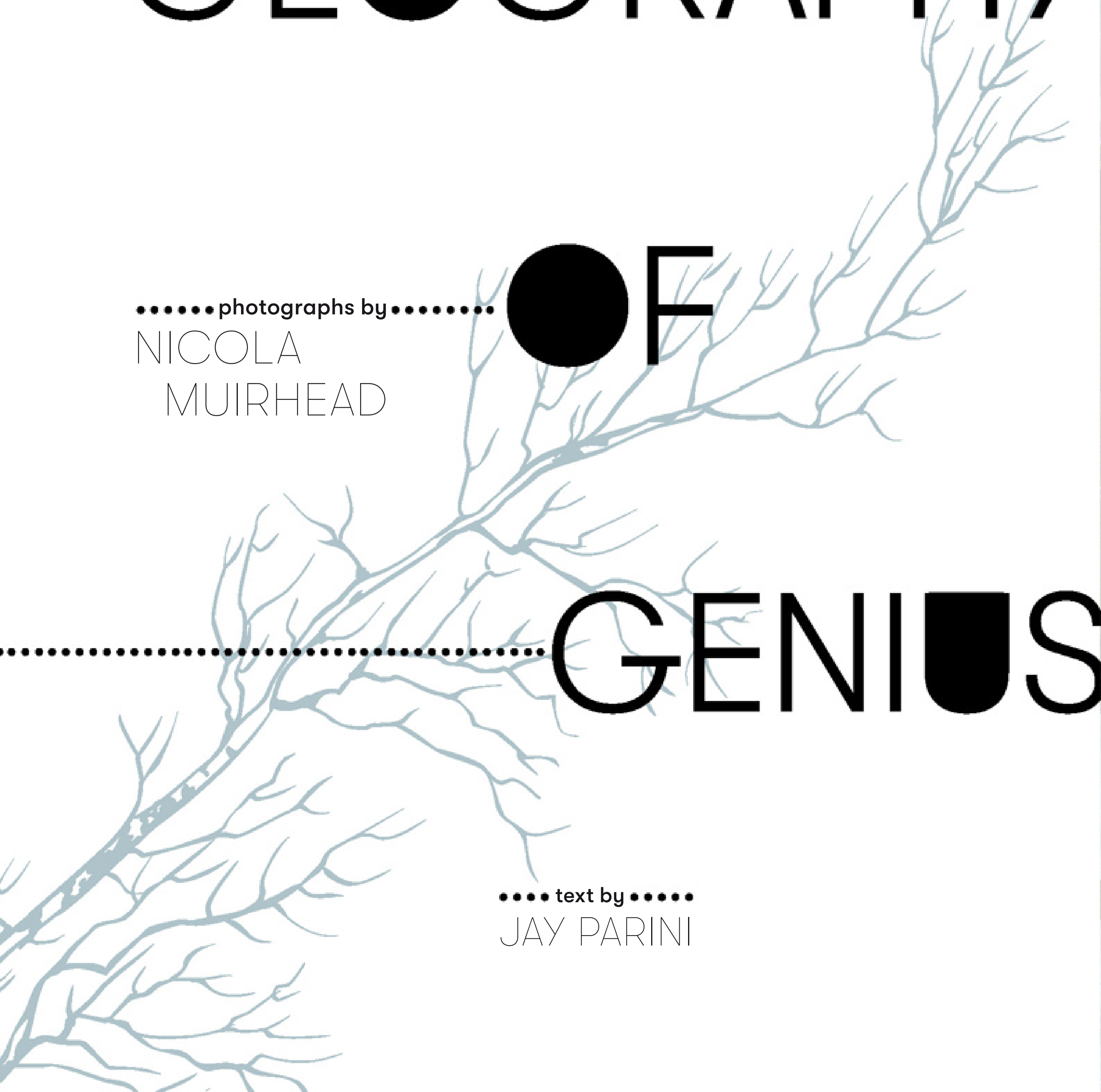
Nature is a continuity. Staring at screens all day, we usually have no idea what is going on with it. Its wilder parts don’t always stop at the edge of the patio; and the possibility that we might step out the back door and encounter a 17-foot-long apex predator who, to speak plainly, could eat us (pythons have eaten people in other parts of the world), shows poor stewardship, at best. The pros who are out looking for pythons every day fulfill nature’s higher demand that we pay attention. ◆

THE MYSTERIOUS BEAUTY
OF THE WORLD THAT
INSPIRED THE STARK LYRICISM
OF **ROBERT FROST**

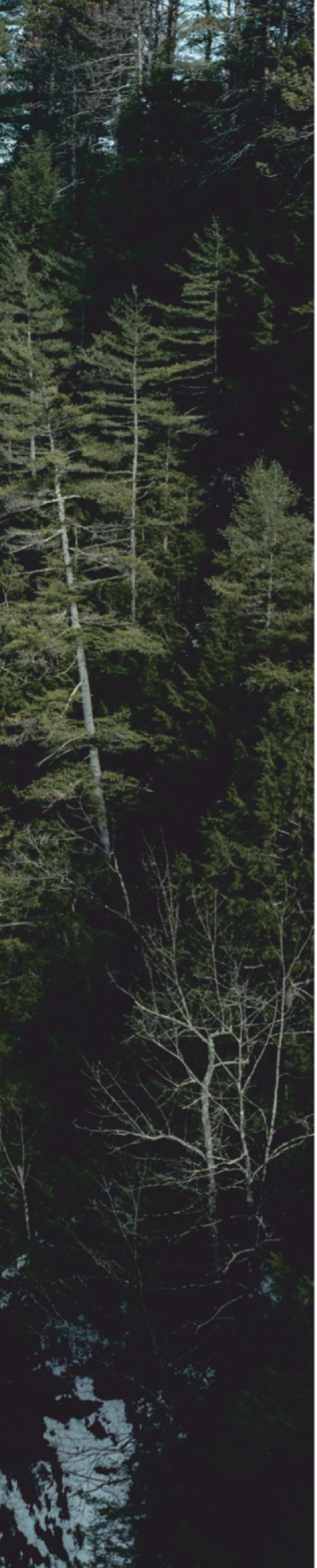
GEOGRAPHY OF GENIUS

photographs by
NICOLA
MUIRHEAD

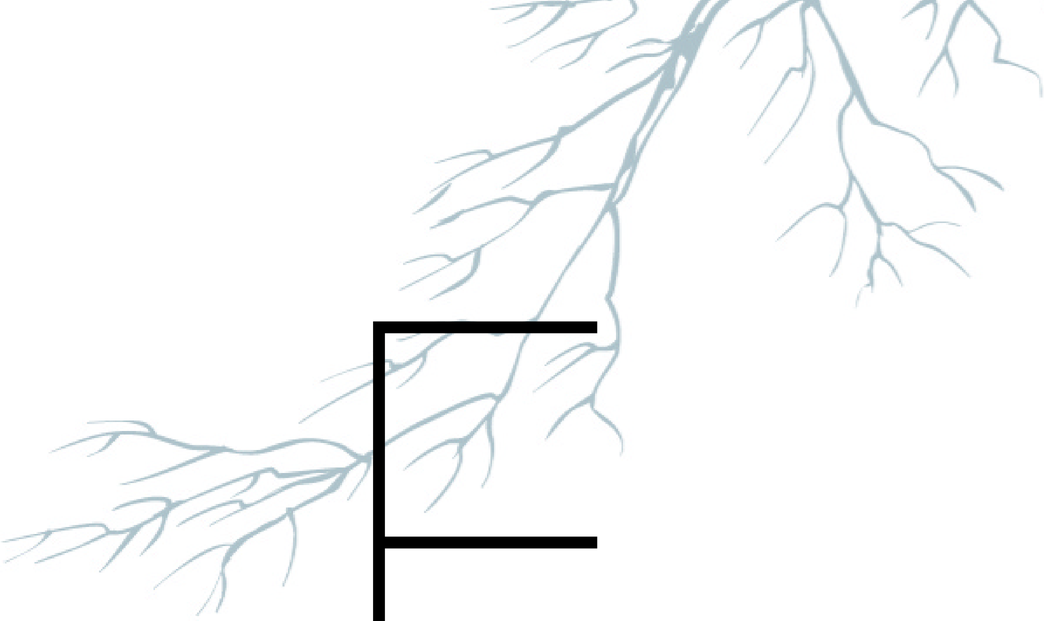
text by
JAY PARINI



The family of Jaidyn MacCorison, 11 (at a New Hampshire gas station), goes back generations in the region.



Mile-long, 165-foot-deep Quechee Gorge, known as "Vermont's Little Grand Canyon," was formed by glacial melt eroding a ridge 13,000 years ago, during the ice age.



FOR MUCH OF MY ADULT LIFE, I'VE lived in the country Robert Frost called "north of Boston." There were seven years in New Hampshire, now 36 in Vermont. And I feel pretty sure I'll end my days surrounded by small villages, isolated farms, stands of maple and spruce, snowy fields, dry stone walls, cold running brooks, and lots of reticent people whose conversation often doesn't run beyond "yep" or "nope." To say I'm glad to live in this world is an understatement. This is home.

It was reading Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" when I was 15 that set me on the path that led to my adult life—I eventually became his biographer. I'll never forget being stunned by these lines in that poem, which features a lonely man, a horse-drawn sled, and the dark and deep woods that surround him: "The only other sound's the sweep / Of easy wind and downy flake." I fell in love with that voice, so lyrical and centered, and begged my parents to take a vacation in Frost country, and they generously agreed. We packed up the car in Pennsylvania and drove to New Hampshire

Charles "Andy" Desilets often makes his way to Cannon Mountain ski lodge in New Hampshire, where, he says, "I'm most at home in the wilderness."

Cannon Mountain
New Hampshire

Beneath the crystalline waters of Echo Lake, in New Hampshire's White Mountains, 39 feet at its deepest point, lies a mineral-striated granite lake bed.

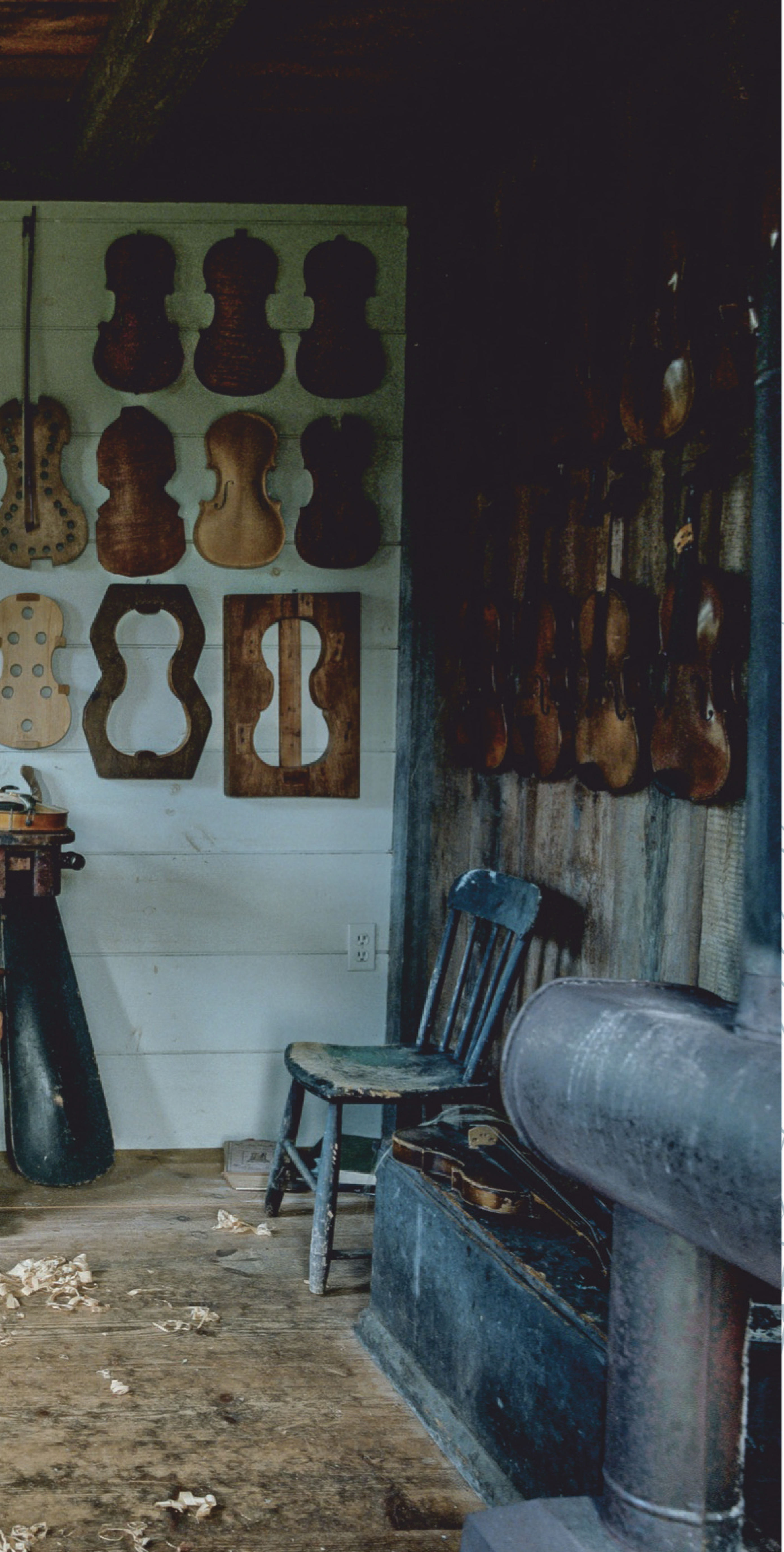
and Vermont to have a look around. Needless to say, the landscape spoke to me, and it still does. In fact, it has become a conversation of sorts: I speak back to it as well, writing poems that reflect the world around me.

For me, poetry is always language adequate to experience, and this seems especially true of Frost and the images he summons in his poems. Probably the best of his poetry moves through the seasons, which he takes to represent the seasons of the soul. We move from the "hushed October morning mild" of "October" to the almost terrifying silence of the winter fields, with lonely mailboxes and fences, with the odd truck on a country lane, or the intense beauty of leafless trees, their limbs black against the white sky, to the immense emptiness of a snowy day, when there are no tracks anywhere: just the blank slate waiting to be filled in whatever ways life that day will afford. The winter deepens inside and out, as Frost suggests in "Desert Places": "I have it in me so much nearer home / To scare myself with my own desert places."

Spring, as Frost says, "is the mischief in me," as in "Mending Wall" where he "walks the line" with his neighbor to repair the dry stone wall that separates their properties. And in the beautiful "Spring Pools," which might well be Frost's finest poem, he talks about the mirrors of water from melted snow that reflect the sky

From his home base, here in New London, New Hampshire, the photographer's father often accompanied his daughter on road trips during much of 2017, as she created her New England chronicle.

& POOR'S
FINE
TARD



At the New London Historical Society's recreated 19th-century village, many of the structures date from the early to mid-1800s. The violinmaker's shop is a modern reproduction, paying homage to the instrument that would have been central to festivities year-round in the life of the town.

Gabrielle Lenotte of North Conway, New Hampshire, a descendant of New Hampshire's original inhabitants, the Abenaki, identifies herself as a spiritualist, rooted in her people's ancient and deep connection to nature.

"almost without defect." These pools chill and shiver in the woods as the oak and maple, beech and birch, all soak up the liquid "to bring dark foliage on." These symbolic pools have a power in them as they set in motion a process of transformation that leads, at last, to the glories of summer.

And summer, for Frost, is a season when we experience "the heat of the sun" in meadows and uncut fields, a season of flowers by the roadside, a season of birdsong. "Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten," he says in "The Oven Bird," one of my favorite poems. It's the high point in life's cycle. And yet buried in its midst one senses the end of summer, "that other fall we name the fall." The oven bird is a warbler that sings, like the poet, of the passing of all good things "The question that he frames in all but words / Is what to make of a diminished thing."

My life mirrors Frost in so many ways. I live in a farmhouse that dates to 1850, a house where the hired hands from the nearby farm lived in the late 19th century. Along the way this became a family house. What's strange is that so little has changed here. The imagery of my life is the imagery of Frost's poetry, and—like Frost himself, who lived nearby—I like walking in the woods in every season. A clarity is found in the silence and beauty of these woods, when one drinks in the surroundings. "Here are your waters and your watering place," he writes in the last lines of "Directive," saying: "Drink and be whole again beyond confusion." ◆

At New Hampshire's Little Sunapee Lake, an ice-fishing hut, not yet towed off as the spring thaws begin, tilts on the melting surface. Winter catches may include perch, pickerel, or even trout.

MELVILLE'S

Lost Pa

MY IMPROBABLE VOYAGE IN SEARCH OF THE MISUNDERSTOOD AUTHOR

radise

OF AMERICA'S GREATEST EPIC ADVENTURE • BY WILLIAM T. VOLLMANN

The entrance to Taiohae Bay, on the island of Nuku Hiva, where Herman Melville lived in 1842.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IRENAEUS HEROK

1

THIS IS THE TALE OF A MAN WHO FLED from desperate confinement, whirled into Polynesian dreamlands on a plank, sailed back to "civilization," and then, his genius predictably unremunerated, had to tour the universe in a little room. His biographer calls him "an unfortunate fellow who had come to maturity penniless and poorly educated." Unfortunate was likewise how he ended.

Who could have predicted the greatness that lay before Herman Melville? In 1841, the earnest young man sneaked out on his unpaid landlady and signed on with the New Bedford whaler *Acushnet*, bound for the South Seas. He was 21, eager and shockingly open-minded, yearning not just to see but to live. In *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847) and the other seafaring novels inspired by his exploits over the next three years, written in the half-decade before he commenced *Moby-Dick*, his word-voyage aboard the *Pequod*, Melville wrote with bighearted curiosity about fearsome "savages" and cultural otherness. To honor this prophet of empathy, this spring I set out for French Polynesia, to see some of the watery part of the world, and to view what I could of the place and its inhabitants, which formed in our novelist his moral conscience and gave unending sail to his language and his metaphors. Back in America, he had to learn to savor these gifts, for after tasting briefly of success he would not have much else to sustain him.

Herman Melville at 27 years old, c. 1846, around the time he published *Typee* and *Omoo*, the South Seas novels that made him famous.

According to *Typee*, Melville bathed with his indigenous lover "Fayaway" each morning in the river running through Nuku Hiva's Taipi Valley.

CULTURE CLUB / GETTY IMAGES

2

HERMAN MELVILLE WAS BORN 200 years ago, on August 1, 1819. Both of his grandfathers were celebrities of the Revolutionary War. His mother's father, Peter Gansevoort, had defended Fort Schuyler against the Redcoats. His father's father, Thomas Melvill (no "e"), one of Samuel Adams' co-conspirators, took part in that infamous hooliganism called the Boston Tea Party. After victory they both came into money. Unfortunately for Herman Melville, his father, Allan, borrowed heavily from many quarters, including his wife's not yet allotted inheritance, concealing debts, skipping out on creditors.

Allan died in 1832. Now Herman, age 12, had to leave school to toil at the New York State Bank, of which his unforgiving benefactor Uncle Peter was one of the directors. From this torture the boy was pulled out to labor at his elder brother Gansevoort's furrier establishment, which presently failed. We glimpse him back in school, then out again: a would-be canal surveyor, and probably a hired laborer. "Sad disappointments in several plans which I had sketched for my future life," runs the opening page of his fourth novel, *Redburn* (1849), a crowd-pleaser about a naif on his first voyage among rough sailors, ringing highly autobiographical. "The necessity of doing something for myself, united to a naturally roving disposition, had now conspired within me, to send me to sea as a sailor."

In 1839, Melville signed up as a deckhand on the *St. Lawrence* to Liverpool. He was gone from June to October—barely long enough to peep into the wider world. In January 1841 he absconded again, this time to board the whaler *Acushnet*.

It was on the *Acushnet* that Melville read *The Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex*, a memoir of the expedition whose destruction, out on Pacific waters after a gigantic sperm whale smashed its head into the ship, gave our not-yet author a first inkling of the plot of his greatest work. In the 19th century, of course, whales were not intelligent creatures to be protected but monsters to be monetized. "For, thought Starbuck," chief mate of the *Pequod* in *Moby-Dick*, "I am here in this critical ocean to kill whales for my living, and not to be killed by them for theirs."

By June 1842, having sailed south around Cape Horn and into the Pacific, the *Acushnet* had filled 750 barrels with whale oil. Melville wrote later about how it would have been obtained:

> "*The red tide poured from all sides of the monster like brooks down a hill. His tormented body rolled not in brine but in blood, which bubbled and seethed for furlongs behind in their wake. The slanting sun playing upon this crimson pond in the sea, sent back its reflection into every face, so that they all glowed to each other like red men. . . . Starting from his trance into that unspeakable thing called his 'flurry,' the monster horribly wallowed in his blood, over-wrapped himself in impenetrable, mad, boiling spray. . . . At last, gush after gush of clotted red gore . . . shot into the frighted air: and falling back again, ran dripping down his motionless flanks into the sea. His heart had burst!*"

After 18 months at sea, Melville was getting sick of the whole business. In *Typee*, his first novel—a mix of autobiography, fabulist chicanery, and unattributed borrowings from many earlier works, in which he dramatized the time he spent among Polynesian cannibals until, fearing for his life, he fled—Melville, in the guise of a character called Tom, denounced the *Acushnet*'s captain as a tyrant, pronounced the voyage overprotracted, bemoaned the food. I myself would have declined whale-cruising on first sight of those dark and filthy cubbyholes set in around the bow, their wood on the verge of decay—how they must have stunk! Here slept the crew, sometimes for two or three years at a stretch.

Coming into Taiohae Bay, off Nuku Hiva, part of a Polynesian island group called the Marquesas, Melville wrote in *Typee* that the beauty of the harbor "was lost to me then," seeing as he could focus only on six French warships. He happened to be arriving as the French and British were openly competing for Polynesian converts and territory. That year, a French admiral named Abel Aubert du Petit-Thouars sweet-talked the archipelago's chiefs, who imagined they were getting protection, into signing annexation treaties.

What might have been going on there in June of 1842? One badly reproduced engraving from a "commemorative" 1992 booklet is at least *said* to derive from that very month. In it we see the bay crawling with ships and boats, not to mention what might be a native canoe, while onshore stand at least two rows of stout-looking French edifices, evidently of stone or brick. As the Melville scholar John Bryant, founder of the journal *Leviathan* and editor of the Penguin *Typee*, remarks: "The young whaler had come to Nuku Hiva at precisely the moment in which that island culture was about to die." Melville was not shy in condemning what he saw. One of *Typee*'s page headings reads: "REFLECTIONS ON EUROPEANS' CRUELTIES."

Corinne Raybaud, a French historian who has lived in Tahiti for 40 years, and has much to say about our author's Polynesian travels, told me that Melville wasn't the first Anglo to visit Nuku Hiva, but he might have been the first, or among the first, to dwell with that island's most anti-European tribe, the Typee—or, as they now orthographize themselves, the Taipi. Her best guess was that he was there, all told, for three weeks.

"THE WHITE OF HIS SKIN, OF THE SKIN

For Melville, the lure, I think, was the *idea* of Polynesia. As one American missionary reported of his encounters there, a dozen years before Melville took to sea, "I am more and more disgusted with the nakedness and a hundred other of the odious appurtenances of heathenism forced on us at every turn." Those "appurtenances" made many a young man's heart sing, as Melville would have known: He had a cousin aboard that missionary's very ship. How must this idea of Polynesia have inflamed

In societies across Polynesia, elaborate tattoos (from the Polynesian word "tatau") have been used for thousands of years to indicate genealogy, wealth and social status.

In *Omoo*, Melville sails from Tahiti to the beaches of Moorea, with its "musical" waves, in the boat of two "Yankee lads" who were deserters like him.

OF HIS FAMILY, IS THE SAME YOU," SAID JEAN PIERRE. *"C'EST LE DESCENDANT."*

our raw young American, who came from drudgery, shame, worry and degradation? What must it have been like for him, undernourished in experience and overfed on Christian pieties, to chart his own moral course on this partially unmapped continent?

3

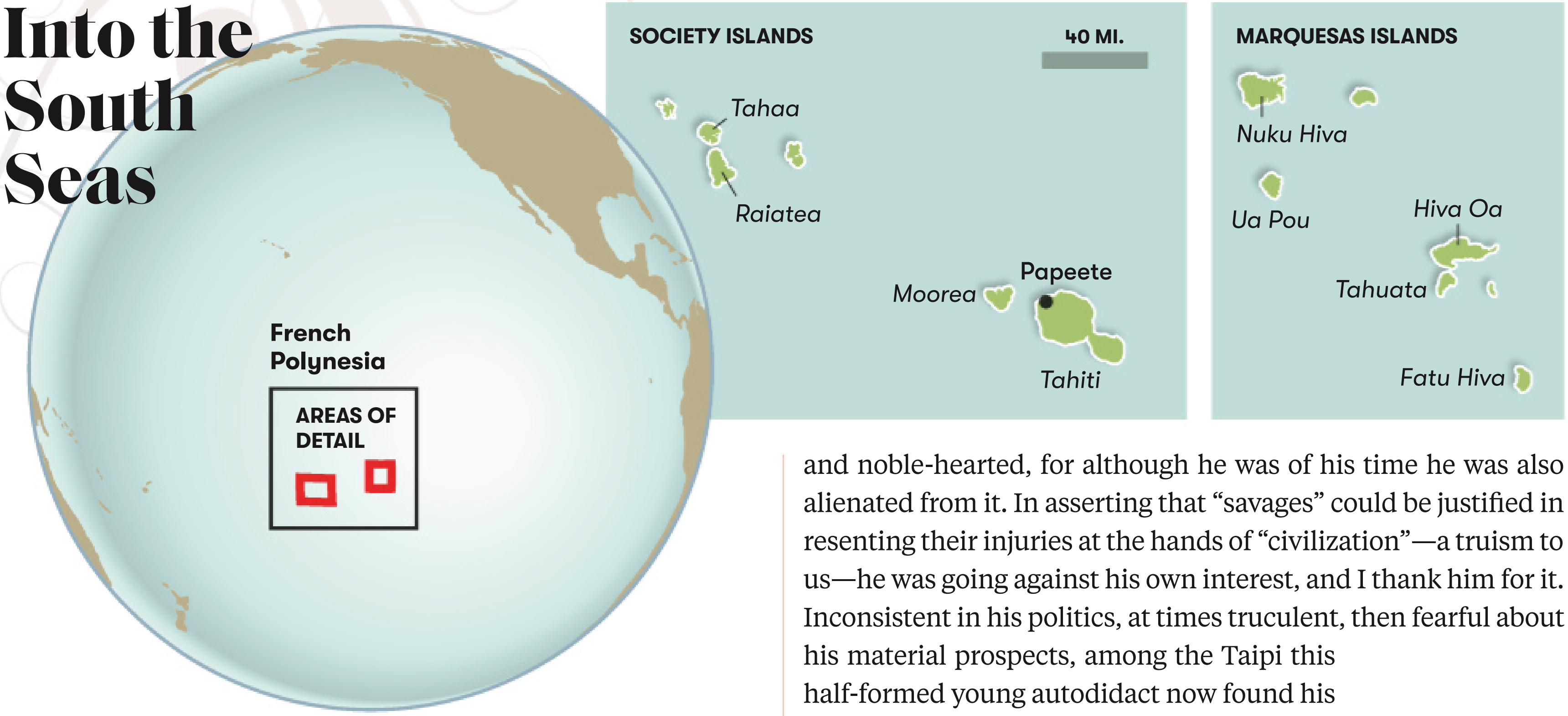
TODAY, TAIOHAE BAY'S astonishingly blue watercircle is softly enwrapped by the curves of high green promontories decorated by rain and ferny jungle. My first impression of it, descending a serpentine route from Nuku Hiva's dry side, consisted of golden light shooting down across the tops of palms and banana trees in the slanting valley, and a sudden cleanly bitter fragrance. Two days later, Taiohae's circlet of hills was drier, and some of the glow had bled out of the sky. On another drizzly morning the bay wore brilliant mirror-gray, like a daguerreotype. I thought I scented *pua* blossoms.

Once at anchor, the *Acushnet*'s captain, upon releasing the men for shore leave, could not abstain from warning against the "tattooed scoundrels" who might inveigle them into a stew pot. The legend of those scoundrels preceded them. As *Typee* relates, "Their very name is a frightful one; for the word 'Typee' in the Marquesan dialect signifies a lover of human flesh." Evidently not so frightful as to forestall shore leave, however. How could such cautions win out against testosterone and earnest curiosity? Off rowed the starboard watch, Melville among them. It was July 9, 1842. He would not board the *Acushnet* again.

Immediately a rainstorm caused Melville's party to shelter in "an immense canoe-house which stood hard by the beach." After the others had fallen asleep, Melville-as-Tom and shipmate Toby Greene crept out and began to ascend the mountain. They would hardly have been daunted by that warm rain. It must have washed away the stink of rotten whale blood and old sweat. They were trading cruel discipline for breadfruit, foul biscuit for mangoes, gravelike berths of darkness for the emerald life that pulsates through *Typee*. Their hopes were decorated by wild taro with its thick, dark leaves, by those yellow flower-stars on the massive hibiscus trees.

My hopes, after departing Taiohae, were pearl-gray like the water itself. I set out with Jean Pierre Piriotua, a man of Taipi extraction who guided me on Nuku Hiva and agreed to bring me to the valley of his relatives. Passing a cemetery, we next left behind the uninscribed wooden monument to a vagabond named Melville, erected by a local artist in the early 1990s. On Nuku Hiva, light, color and fragrance were as restless as the sea itself. We climbed a cemented road, winding steeply up out of the bay, alongside

Into the South Seas



a banana plantation, with a wet red cliff to the right and sky to the left. Readers of *Typee* might plausibly infer that Tom and Toby's ramble begins with a comparable route. (Here I pause to admit that one should never mistake Melville's narrative voice for literal truth—yet what am I to do? I read his books in a spirit of imaginative empathy, spiced with skepticism.) All too soon, Tom and Toby encounter steep canyons and ridges that bewilder them. Dividing their meager store of bread, they stumble on, weakening, getting soaked at night in makeshift lean-tos. Tom begins to go lame. And then they approach a precipice and gaze down into a paradisiacal valley of "universal verdure." Unsure whether the valley is home to a supposedly friendly tribe of Nuku Hivans, or to the "ferocious Typees," our heroes descend into that moist green heaven. And then what? Well, you know from the title where they land.

Having appropriately milked the shock of their choice, Melville promptly begins—and here is what gives *Typee* much of its richness—to undermine its sinister connotations. First the Taipis feed them, an excellent termination to five starving days. And the blessings continue! They lie down to sleep unmolested. In the morning, nubile members of "the adorable sex" conduct a "long and minute . . . investigation" of their persons.

The powerful chief Mehevi now visits, dressed in a splendidly imposing outfit. What Tom, whose name the chief pronounces "Tommo," finds "most remarkable" is "the elaborate tattooing displayed on every noble limb." Most Euro-American observers from this period would have deployed the word "hideous." Melville asserts that Mehevi "might certainly have been regarded as one of Nature's noblemen, and the lines drawn upon his face may possibly have denoted his exalted rank."

And yet—as much as anyone else, Herman Melville was of his time. In *Typee* he informs us that these "simple savages" can gain "the utmost delight from circumstances which would have passed unnoticed in more intelligent communities." To condemn Copernicus for not calculating all that later astronomers proved, to expect of Aristotle that he should see the wrong of slavery, is to deserve the future's most merciless judgment of our own errors that remain invisible to us. Melville could be brave and noble-hearted, for although he was of his time he was also alienated from it. In asserting that "savages" could be justified in resenting their injuries at the hands of "civilization"—a truism to us—he was going against his own interest, and I thank him for it. Inconsistent in his politics, at times truculent, then fearful about his material prospects, among the Taipi this half-formed young autodidact now found his moral compass-needle whirling in the magnetic storms of the unknown.

The scholar Ruth M. Blair proposes that in the character of Tommo, Melville is forming "the complex vision of 'civilization' . . . that would put him for the rest of his life out of kilter with his contemporaries."

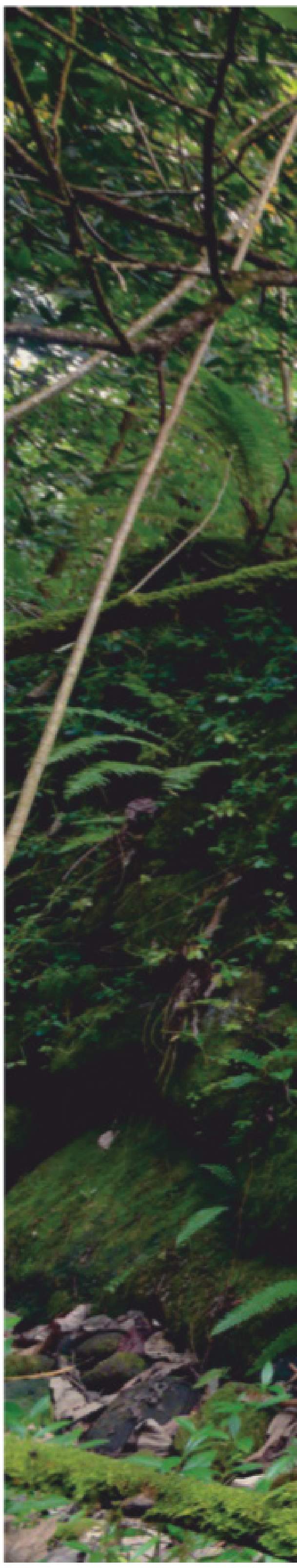
4

WHAT MOST POWERFULLY reorients Tommo's magnet is "the beauteous nymph Fayaway, who was my peculiar favorite," one of "several lovely damsels" who make up the co-residents of Tommo's Taipi Valley abode—an iconic cannibal heroine for all time. Melville describes her at affectionate length. Fayaway was "the very perfection of female grace and beauty," he says. You see, "each feature" was "as perfectly formed as the heart or imagination of man could desire." He adds: "This picture is no fancy sketch; it is drawn from the most vivid recollections of the person delineated." In this portrait, I cannot help but see someone real, someone who was loved.

Many of the people I met on Nuku Hiva believed that "Fayaway" actually existed. They said her name was Peue. Jean Pierre taught me how to say that name: *Pah-oo-ay*. He said that it meant "beautiful" or "woman."

Another Nuku Hivan guide who went by Richard Deane—his "local name," he said, was Temarama, Marquesans traditionally forgoing family names—told me that "Peue means the carpet weaving with banana leaves." He pronounced her name *Peh-oo-weh*.

He said, "Peue was the daughter of one chief over there, and they gave her as a gift



MAP: GUILBERT GATES

to Herman Melville to try to keep him in the middle of them, to use him like a white chief and use him like a translator, and bring some new technique of war and technology to fight the strangers"—that is, the Europeans.

"So you think they wouldn't have eaten him?" I asked.

"No, never."

(But Jean Pierre thought they might have.)

I asked Jean Pierre, "What do you think of Melville—good or bad?"

"The local people like Melville. A beautiful man with white skin and blue eyes, make him a wife! Peue is wife for important people."

Not long before the road forked he said: "This mountain, Melville take to Taipi Nui place," and he pointed across the next abyss. Although he possessed the romantic credibility of a native informant, my certainties had been poisoned by bitter academic contests about Melville's veracity, and about the topography itself. I thought to myself: How could anybody know?

5

NOW WE WENT DOWN into the Taipi Valley, which lay as Melville described it, long and narrow between two high ridges. Inland of the greenish sea with its magnificent clouds, the bay appeared shallow and flat-bottomed. I dreamed my way out into that long stretch of wide ocean. There were many white yachts, which Jean Pierre said were inhabited by foreigners who anchored here "to relax."

The Taipi Valley is dotted with the ruins of old settlements and the stone foundations of abandoned houses, such as this one where, according to legend, Melville lived.

Up the valley ran the river called Vai-i-nui, the big water. The name "Taipi" means "high tide" or "where the river meets the sea." So here we were, at Taipi. Jean Pierre picked a white pua blossom from a tree, which he placed in his long dark hair.

I had requested to meet any Taipi who might bear Melville among his ancestors, so Jean Pierre drove me to meet his uncle, Monsieur Jean Vainiaanui, "called Pukiki," as he added in my notebook. "The white of his skin, of the skin of his family, is the same you," said my guide. *"C'est le descendant."*

The front room of the house was dim and moderately cool. The uncle and aunt showed small pleasure at my intrusion. They had met journalists before. Since I myself would have disliked being imposed on in the name of some distant foreign ancestor who had impregnated my greater than great-great-grandmother and then abandoned the family, I kept it short—all the more so since Jean Pierre, who ordinarily stood by me in case I had questions, now strolled outside and left me to my own devices. Perhaps the bargain ran as follows: The uncle submitted to interviews in order to help Jean Pierre make money. In return, Jean Pierre avoided performing any action that would extend those interviews.

Retiring into a dark inner room, Monsieur Vainiaanui returned with a small photoportrait of Melville, which of course impressed me until I learned that a "French friend" (perhaps a journalist) had recently presented it to him.

"Sir, are you a descendant of Melville?"

He said something that sounded like "*Pas mari*." I could make no sense of it. A fluent French speaker who reviewed the audio file later concluded: "He really is mumbling, and that was the hardest part to figure out. I believe that he is saying no, that he is not a descendant of Melville, because the first word is definitely '*pas*,' or 'not.' "

"For how many generations has your family been here?" I asked Monsieur Vainiaanui.

He was silent, then said: "Many. We live here. My great-great-grandfather came here."

"How many people are there now in Taipivai?"

"Four hundred."

"And the people here, they still have memories of Melville?"

"No," he said calmly.

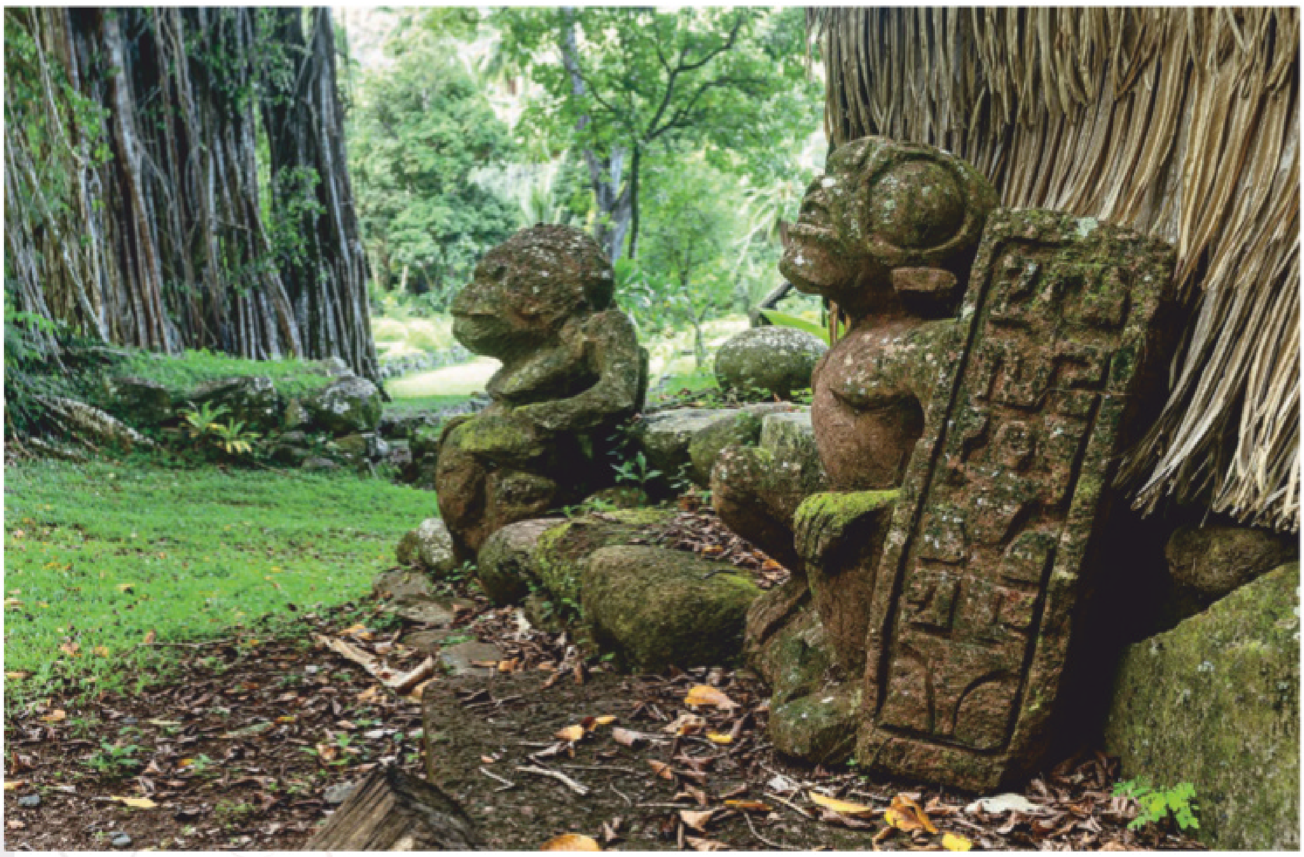
"What do you think of him? For you, is he someone good or bad?"

"Yes, a good question. Good or bad? I think that Melville was an adventurer; he was someone who wanted to see things. It was normal that he came here."

"And the people here don't have any memory of Peue?"

"No," he said.

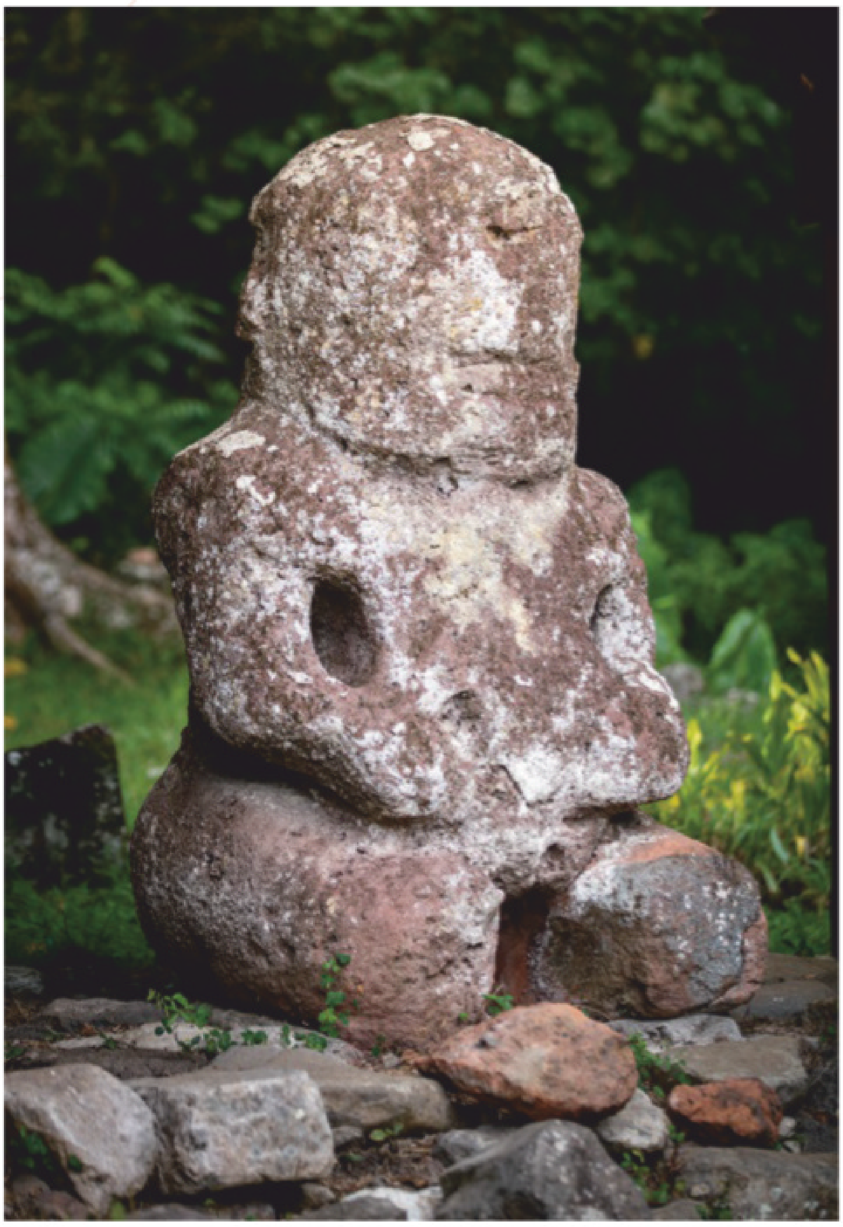
Hating myself for having troubled him, I thanked



Tikis and engravings at the extensive ceremonial site called Tohua Koueva, near Taiohae, which belonged to the clan of a Nuku Hivan chief killed by the French in 1845.

> “MY TATTOO IS MY CLAN’S STORY, MY CHILDREN’S STORY. BUT THEY SAY, ‘MY GOD DON’T LIKE!’”

A tiki at the Nuku Hivan site of Hikokua, in use from A.D. 1250 until the 19th century. The site is also home to the graves of early Christian missionaries.



A tiki at Puamau, on the island of Hiva Oa, which Melville visited after fleeing Nuku Hiva. Half a century later, Paul Gauguin lived out his final years here.

Nuku Hiva’s Church of the Sacred Hearts was described by Robert Louis Stevenson, who visited in 1888, as “good, simple, and shapely.”

him for the interview and went out.

"So he is Melville's descendant?" I asked once more.

"C'est possible," said Jean Pierre.

·6·

WE RE-ENTERED Jean Pierre's truck and drove to a lonely spot in the jungle, approaching the site where Melville might have lived with Peue among the Taipi. Entering the midmorning steam bath, I telescoped my segmented walking stick and launched into another Marquesan perspiration. Jean Pierre was warning about the mosquitoes: *"Beaucoup de dengue,"* he laughed. (Nearly everybody I asked in the Marquesas had suffered at least one visitation of the fever.) Then we walked down a hill-track that quickly petered out in the shrubbery.

In ten minutes we reached our destination, which according to *Typee* lay "about halfway up the ascent of a rather abrupt rise of ground," where "a number of large stones were laid . . . to the height of nearly eight feet." At no great distance flowed the Vai-i-nui River—evidently the stream in which Tommo and Peue bathed for a half-hour each morning. So far, topography corresponded to description, and there, at a right angle to the slope, rose a flat-topped boulder-eminence of approximately eight feet. Its Taipi name, as transliterated by Melville, was a *pi-pi*. Upon it would once have risen some family's house, whose bamboo frame and hibiscus-wood transverses were of course long gone.

Jean Pierre said that this *tohua*, a central cleared area for clan festivities that at one end might include a place for human sacrifice, had been abandoned generations ago due to malaria, before the dengue fever came.

"How do you know this was the Melville site?"

"Because my grandfather told me," Jean Pierre said.

Mostly the tohua was a jumble of rocks, the ground overgrown to an ankle's thickness by an ivyish plant that had been imported from New Zealand to feed the cows. Here where Melville and Peue used to "stroll along," "sometimes hand in hand," with "perfect charity" for all "and especial good-will towards each other," I took my own promenade—until Jean Pierre warned me against falling coconuts. In 2007 a tourist and her guide were killed by them at a scenic waterfall nearby.

Sitting on a mossy wet boulder, I gazed down a steep wall of rocks to the river. My knees were glowing with bites. Below was a pavement of white-lichened boulders and the lovely breeze and the brown-green Vai-i-nui, a rapid creek. In its flow the wading Taipi maidens used to soak their coconut shells and polish them with stones.

I picked a hard green lime from its thorny branch. It was very fragrant. When we stopped for a cheese and cracker lunch, Jean Pierre cut it for me with his machete, so that I could squeeze it into my water bottle.

7

ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS of *Typee* most offensive to 19th-century Americans was its unashamed eroticism. (Another was Melville's rage against the missionaries.) When he began composing it, he "went far indeed in planting not just sensuous but actually obscene passages in his decorous manuscript," writes his biographer Hershel Parker. Omitting those, let us content ourselves with lesser innuendoes: "Bathing in company with troops of girls formed one of my chief amusements." "There was a tenderness in her manner that it was impossible to misunderstand or resist." "Every evening the girls of the house . . . would anoint my whole body"—your *whole* body, Herman?—"with a fragrant oil, squeezed from a yellow root."

Our hero was apparently living easily. But then what? Just as the red, white, yellow and green flower garland that my Taiohae *femme de ménage* Isabelle draped round my neck smelled so spearmint-bright at first, then wilted and began to stink, just so it was, my friends, for poor old Tommo! You see, he kept worrying that his Typee hosts would eat him.

What if those ill thoughts were mere embellishments, and the simple truth was that the joy had drained from his sojourn in Taipivai? "The gods themselves are not for ever glad," he writes in *Moby-Dick*. "The ineffaceable, sad birth-mark in the brow of man, is but the stamp of sorrow in the signers."

"SELDOM HAVE SAVAGES FOUND SO ZEALOUS A VINDICATOR OF THEIR MORALS . . ."

Most likely is that being ignorant of the Marquesan language and culture, he simply *did not know* whether he was on the menu.

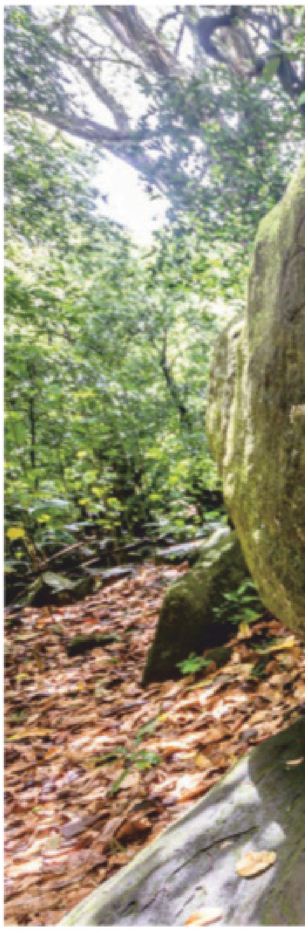
8

LET ME DESCRIBE A CERTAIN weird old ruin on the far side of the island. A honey smell came in the evening breeze, and I heard a crowlike croaking. Palms bent together and whispered behind the long, low walls of a wide-stepped terrace. I heard a fluttering sound, then a bird began calling *waaa!*, and everything stayed motionless on the black basalt platforms. In the humid twilight, the platforms with their white lichen began to look sinister. My eye was held by a single banyan tree, maybe 500 years old, which sprang upward like some grisly and sacred entity upon an altar. The clouds darkened; the terraces were already silhouettes; the leaves began to go utterly dark.

By the time that Jean Pierre led me to it, the site's famous petroglyph boulder could barely be seen. Of its depictions I most remember the great turtle, represented because turtles come from the sea to lay eggs, then perish; hence after we die, our spirit goes likewise to the sea; thus the artist might have believed, Jean Pierre said, "maybe a thousand years after Christ."

Feeling my way with my walking stick, I tapped from boulder to boulder. Jean Pierre pointed into a deep pit, dark against the darkness, which he called the ancient calaboose. Really it was more like a meat locker—the place where captured enemy warriors were kept until eating time. Imagine being a lonely guest near any such place (and every clan had one), among people with whom one could scarcely communicate. How could Melville know what the smile of Peue *really* signified, or whether Kory-Kory, his gentle manservant, might suddenly take on a butcher's role?

Nuku Hivan archaeological sites such as Kamuihei, featuring large stone petroglyphs, are thought to date from more than 600 years ago.



9

ALL WE KNOW OF HIS ESCAPE—overwrought in *Typee*, which is not to say false; the indigenes may have peacefully traded him back to the Europeans—is that in August 1842 our author ended up on the whaler *Lucy Ann*, an adventure he drew on for *Typee*'s sequel, *Omoo*. Short-handed thanks to desertions, the ship's captain rescued Melville, who signed on to cruise as far as Tahiti. Reasonably fearful of more desertions, at Tahiti the captain forbade his men shore leave; thus did Melville, insubordinate as always, join a mutiny. (It failed.)

In Tahiti they threw him in Calabooza Beretanee (Melville's transliteration), which in Tahitian means "English jail." I would have liked to see this place, but nothing remained of it. Our author had his little ways; soon his confinement was relaxed, then remitted, and he found himself a vagrant once again. In the time he was in Tahiti, he observed white missionaries invading people's homes at mealtimes, while native constables dragooned whomever they could catch to Sunday services. The new moral code was punitively enforced; the education system was a sort of apartheid. *Omoo* bitterly describes the cane-thumping old missionaries at whose sight the natives "slink into their huts." Melville could only conclude that "the Tahitians are worse off now" for the encounter.

In Papeete, French Polynesia's capital, on Tahiti, my pension host Luc François did not disagree with Melville. "I wish the missionaries stay at home, because they say their god is better than other god!" He laughed. "They say, 'Now you have to pray to my god, you have to put on a dress, you have to hide a tattoo.' But my tattoo is my clan's story, my children's story. But they say, 'My god don't like!' We are a small place, a small piece of the universe. Why come to me and say like that?"

With native culture changed, Melville concluded that the islanders' "prospects are hopeless." The English-language guidebook whose job it was to entice me here, so that I could inflict my own mite of cultural damage, admitted that "domestic violence and incest are prevalent. This is closely connected with high rates of alcoholism . . . little progress has been made." I found the guidebook's final assessment off the mark. For one thing, Tahiti's inhabitants, about 9,000, according to Melville, now numbered nearly 200,000. Some of them smiled at me, right there in Papeete's motionless humid shadows, with traffic's soft hum all around me as I sat in a grove of palm trees, entertaining people with my compliments in bad French. At night they danced for each other, not for money. Their language still lived.

10

AROUND NOVEMBER 1842, Melville decamped for the island of Moorea. Finding himself pressed into unhappy work digging potatoes, he decided to visit a village called Tamai, where "dwelt the most beautiful and unsophisticated women."

For the sake of scholarship, I tootled over to Tamai, now orthographized Temae, and in a different part of the island than where Melville had put it. He spoke of a lake; yes, I did see a body of brackish water beside the airport; its shallows were stringy with algae and littered with rotting coconuts. Some days after viewing the "passionate" movements, "with throbbing bosoms," of those Temae sylphs, Melville received warning that the law was coming; fearing that he would be arrested for vagrancy, he had to clear out.

I next lay down in a concrete pavilion by the turquoise ocean with its reef line just before the horizon. Ten days after fleeing the constables at Temae, Melville marched into this exact spot. He was expert as ever at accepting the hospitality of Polynesians. Bathed, sated and dressed, he took the time to admire coconut oil burning inside a lamp made from half a green melon, "a soft dreamy light being shed through the transparent rind." And here I want to say that so much of his Polynesian writings have to do, as well they should, with the pleasures of idleness, and even somnolence.

The slender, middle-aged Papeetian lady whose machete opened a juice-coconut for me had never heard of Melville; she wondered if that might be my name. The radio was playing an old song I always liked about going to San Francisco. On the way out of town a sign warned of false prophets.

11

FINALLY, MELVILLE SHIPPED OUT on the whaler *Charles and Henry*. Sometime between January and March 1843, he arrived in Hawaii, then called the Sandwich Islands. Most of his doings there cannot be verified. He might have landed at Lahaina. We know he passed some time in Honolulu, where he signed a one-year contract to work as an Englishman's bookkeeper. Meanwhile the *Acushnet*, which had also arrived in Hawaii, posted a complaint of desertion against him.

In August 1843, having characteristically broken his contract, Melville enlisted on the USS *United States*. They landed at Nuku Hiva in October, then came a week anchored just off Tahiti, and that was the last he ever saw of Polynesia.

By now the shy young innocent had found his sea legs. He could defy, desert, blaspheme and fornicate with the best. He had grown comfortable with the fact that "from the wild life they lead . . . sailors, as a class entertain the most liberal notions concerning morality and the Decalogue." And indeed, as Charles Roberts Anderson rather sourly writes on the last page of his 1939 tome *Melville in the South Seas*: "Within a decade the high priest of the South Seas had become, in his own eyes at least, the heretic of an inquisitional civilization."

Melville hated restrictions on his liberty; hence his mutinies and vagabondage. So he kept right on calling out authority, ranging ahead in a long cruise toward unfettered self-expression,

Moorea—seen here from Opunhu Bay—was punctuated with "steep cliffs, hung with pendulous vines, swinging blossoms in the air," Melville wrote.

which in our world naturally equals self-destructiveness. Of Hawaii, he wrote, "What has ["the savage"] to desire at the hand of Civilization? . . . Let the once smiling and populous Hawaiian islands, with their now diseased, starving, and dying natives, answer the question. The missionaries may seek to disguise the matter as they will, but the facts are incontrovertible." Defiant always, with ever-growing daring in his style, he sailed in the direction of his unknown greatness.

12

AND SO HE CAME HOME to his America—by no means to ours. "Thrice happy are they who, inhabiting some yet undiscovered island, have never been brought into contaminating contact with the white man," runs *Typee*. It follows that he had contaminated them, and they most certainly did him the same favor.

He wrote to Nathaniel Hawthorne, whom he adored, that he "had no development at all" until age 25, which is to say, around 1844. In that year he began to write *Typee*. The Harper brothers rejected it a year later. His brother Gansevoort, who remained the family's support, carried it to the London publisher Murray, who printed it moderately bowdlerized in 1846. Almost immediately, thanks to the writer Washington Irving, *Typee* gained an American publisher, George Putnam.

The first reviews were favorable—and no other book of his ever sold so well. It made him famous. But on March 14, a British periodical, *The Critic*, said: "Seldom have savages found so zealous a vindicator of their morals; rarely, too has Christianity owned so ungrateful a son." Although *Typee* and then *Omoo* continued to garner praise, attacks on his Christianity, bolstered by Horace Greeley's denunciations of his "hankering for loose company not always of the masculine order," began to undo Melville's career.

When Gansevoort died suddenly in 1846, the young author had to increase his efforts to support his penniless old mother. Fortunately, he had attracted the rich and pretty Elizabeth Shaw.

What did she see in him? He was handsome—fascinating—a storyteller. He must have seemed someone of promise. In other words, he happened, in that weird interlude between when he was forgetting Peue's excellence at playing the nose flute but was scarcely yet imagining the long bulk of the white whale gliding toward the *Pequod*, to be capable of what most people call "responsibility."

"WHAT I FEEL MOST MOVED TO WRITE, THAT IS BANNED—IT WILL NOT PAY. YET, ALTOGETHER, WRITE THE OTHER WAY I CANNOT."

Pressured by his American publisher into reprinting *Typee* with numerous anti-missionary and erotic expurgations, he went along, hoping for some future income guarantee—for he craved to marry Lizzie, whose father did not intend to throw her into poverty.

With that self-destructive defiance I love him for, he sharpened his harpoon against the missionaries, quite gleefully, in *Omoo*. Nor did he desist. Hershel Parker writes that he finally "settled" his "grudge against his Presbyterian accusers and tormenters" in Chapter 10 of *Moby-Dick*, in which Ishmael worships the cannibal Queequeg's wooden idol.

But that actually settled nothing. Again and again the great white whale of Judeo-Christian conformity smashed at his morals. Lizzie had hoped to marry Herman in church, "but we all thought," she wrote in a letter, that "if it were to get about previously that 'Typee' was to be seen on such a day, a great crowd might rush out of mere curiosity"—or worse.

On August 7, 1847, three days after the wedding, the *Daily Tribune* chuckled: "BREACH OF PROMISE SUIT EXPECTED MR. HERMAN TYPEE OMOO MELVILLE has recently been united in lawful wedlock to a young lady of Boston. The fair forsaken FAYAWAY will doubtless console herself by suing him. . . . "

13

THE MELVILLES LIVED ON Lizzie's father's money. To improve his reputation, which is to say his finances, in 1849 Herman rushed out *Mardi* and *Redburn*, followed by *White-Jacket* the next year, all tales of a novice at sea. These mollified, if they did not excite, reviewers: "Mr. Melville seems likely to go ahead again, if he will only take time and pains, and not over-write himself." In the best fashion of any career-suicide, he regarded both latter volumes with contempt, writing to Lizzie's father (who may not have been delighted to hear it) that "it is my earnest desire to write those sort of books which are said to 'fail.' "

As if to prove the point, he now commenced his deep dive. He wrote in an adulatory essay about Hawthorne's fiction: "Now it is the blackness in Hawthorne . . . that so fixes and fascinated me. This blackness it is that furnished the infinite obscure of his background—the background, against which Shakespeare pays his grandest conceits."

What grand conceit could gambol to most contrasting

› A giant banyan tree, thought to be more than 600 years old, at the ancient sacred burial ground at the Kamuihei archaeological site, on Nuku Hiva.

advantage against a black background? Something white! And why was this whiteness something to write about, to dread, to be haunted by? It could be, as Melville wrote in "The Whiteness of the Whale," the famous 42nd chapter of his opus, "that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation." Who was Melville but a man impelled by the unknown? What remained for him but to voyage beyond everything, to the place where infinity is nothingness, and black and white contain each other?

By now the Melvilles had moved near the Hawthornes in the Berkshires, into the house they called Arrowhead. (Our hero mortgaged it twice over.) And so the former sailor shut himself up tight. Years later, his widow remembered that he "would sit at his desk all day long not eating any thing till four or five o clock—then ride to the village after dark—Would be up early and out walking before breakfast." All the while he was borrowing money and more money, keeping his debts secret.

"What I feel most moved to write, that is banned—it will not pay," he wrote to Hawthorne. "Yet, altogether, write the *other* way I cannot." Then for a brief moment he blinked at what was immutably decreed, temporarily lost faith in his own Shakespeare-black fatality, and added: "So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches." By then *Moby-Dick* was getting set in type.

The "warm, glowing, tropical" night sky of the Taipi Valley gave Melville the sensation that he had been "transported to some fairy region."

14

A CERTAIN underwater photograph in my edition of *The Wreck of the Whaleship Essex* shows a sperm whale headed forward like a finned gray-green torpedo, its lower jaw a strangely narrow appendage to the underside of that vast and squarish head. Such was the whale that stove in the *Essex*, such must have been the whale in *Moby-Dick*: rushing to smash in everything, so that Melville's greatness could come into glory.

In our day, the inhabitants of a biologically diminished planet may feel more sympathy than awe for "that unexampled, intelligent malignity" of the famous white whale, but what makes him such a hauntingly great literary character is his utter, and therefore utterly unreadable, alienness, an infinite magnification of the exotic otherness that his creator had sought in the South Pacific.

Toward that oncoming collision between the whale and the *Pequod*, Melville wrote his way forward, employing wife or sister as copyist, ducking his mother's monitory religiousness, going deeper and darker into the sea, so that in the end he could take us down with him.

He maintained his defiance with a core that was strangely sweet. From *Moby-Dick*: "For as this appalling ocean surrounds the most verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return!"

15

SO WHAT IS THIS NOVEL, with its what and why never entirely explained, its characters never "developed"? What fits it better than the "dimly-discernible greatness" of a great mind, as Melville wrote of Shakespeare? And so comes the bewitching climax and ending of the book, with sharks eating the oars of the whaleboats that row in fated pursuit of that white monster who exemplifies blankness, glory, malice and divinity.

It was published in 1851. The British version came out lacking the epilogue, in which Ishmael reveals himself as the sole survivor of the whale-stove *Pequod*. Accordingly, Melville was denounced for his apparent carelessness in crafting a first-person narrative in which everybody dies. The American version did contain the epilogue, but some reviewers quoted idiotically from the British dispraise. A few Americans were kind. One reviewer who might have been Horace Greeley spoke of its "originality and power." The Springfield, Massachusetts, *Republican* found it "a large and interesting web of narrative," although "there is no Fayaway in it. Alas! fickle and forgetful Melville, that thou should'st ever forget the gentle native who gave herself to thee." Worse yet, the book's "profanity and indecency," warned a Congregationalist newspaper in New York, "makes it impossible for a religious journal heartily to commend any of the works of this author which we have ever perused."

That said it all. His in-laws mostly turned against him; his mother deprecated his many blasphemies; his wife and sisters began to lose their belief in him.

16

AFTER WRITING THE EPIC PARABLE of a man who unrelentingly pursues the mystery that destroys him, Melville turned, as they say, inward, or at least landward. He must have been coming apart by then; whenever the blasts of poverty, humiliation, hatred, derision and disappointment pierced him, he came apart more dramatically, the way a sailing ship might unravel in a typhoon, its rigging all a-squiggle like a cat's hair standing on end.

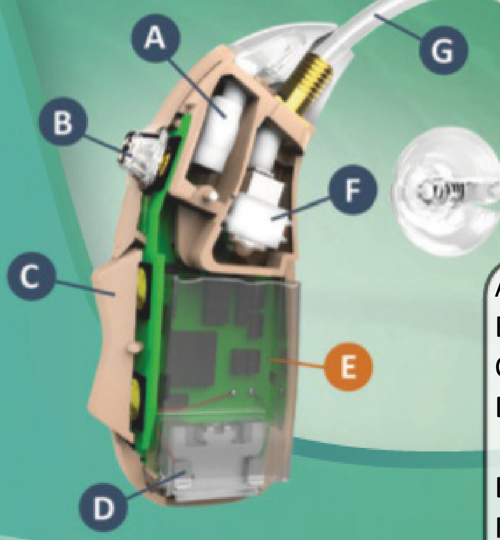
What he had written concerning Ahab now became applicable to himself: "God help thee, old man, thy thoughts have

NEW Rechargeable Digital Hearing Aid Technology Only $229!*

(*Each when you buy a pair)

The new more powerful HearClear™ **HCR3 rechargeable** hearing aid combines advanced technology with a low price to provide you with outstanding value.

New Improved R3 Digital Processor™!



A) Microphone
B) Program Button
C) Volume Control
D) USB Charging Port & Rechargeable Battery
E) New Digital Processor
F) Receiver (Speaker)
G) Sound Tube

5 Star Reviews! ★★★★★

Outstanding Product! "This product is outstanding. Dad loves it, my mom loves it, and I am grateful! Don't believe that you have to spend a lot of money to get a quality hearing aid"
- *Gilmore B.*

HCR3 Features!

- ☑ Digital sound processing chip provides **clear sound and makes speech easier to understand** with less feedback than old analog technology
- ☑ Don't worry about replacing batteries! **Full Charge Gives 16 Hours of Use! (Charger Included)**
- ☑ Easy **On / Off Button**
- ☑ Automatic Noise Reduction and Feedback Cancellation
- ☑ **100% Money Back Guarantee**
- ☑ **4 Programs** for different listening situations
- ☑ Helps most **moderate to significant hearing losses** (call us if you need more power)

Even Better In Pairs!

Your brain is designed to use both ears working together. In fact, studies show that you may be able to **hear up to 3 times better** in noisy situations when using two hearing aids. Buy a pair for the best results and maximum savings!

Simple. Affordable. Rechargeable Digital Hearing Aid - For Only $229!*

The new HearClear™ HCR3 Rechargeable Digital Hearing Aids are now available to you for an unbelievably affordable price! The HCR3 is packed with the same key technologies that all high end digital hearing aids share while leaving out the extra bells and whistles that increase cost and require expensive adjustments. This helps you **hear better, while saving you a lot of money.**

NOW ON SALE!
~~List Price: $849~~
Sale Price: $229*

Your new HearClear HCR3 hearing aids work at a fraction of the cost of name-brand hearing aids, and you won't have to keep changing the batteries! You will love the discreet, comfortable, lightweight Open-fit design. The HCR3 is pre-programmed for most moderate to significant hearing losses, so you won't need professional appointments to make costly adjustments. **It is shipped directly to you and will help you hear better right out of the box!**

You can spend thousands for an expensive hearing aid, or you can spend just **$249** for a hearing aid that is great for most hearing losses **(only $229 each when you buy a pair – hear up to 3 times better than wearing just one)**. We are so sure you will love your hearing aids that we offer a **100% Money Back Guarantee - Risk Free** if you are not satisfied for any reason.

MONEY SAVING OFFER!

Use Coupon Code: **SM97**

1-877-376-3338

***Only $229 Each When You Buy A Pair!**

(Coupon Code & Price Valid For A Limited Time Only)

Advanced Affordable Hearing™
Affordable Quality Since 1996!

A+ BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS | MONEY BACK 100% GUARANTEE | RISK • FREE • Trial | US Company Owned And Operated | FDA REGISTERED

Visit and Save: **www.AdvancedHearing.com/SM97** created a creature in thee; and he whose intense thinking thus makes him a Prometheus; a vulture feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature he creates."

17

HIS AMERICAN PUBLISHER, the Harpers, who had already forced him into ruinous financial terms, disavowed his next work, *Pierre*—alas, a novel about a desperate writer coming undone. His kindly British publisher offered to bring it out, but not soon, and without any advance. Distraught, Melville never answered; thus ended his independent publication on the other side of the Atlantic.

That was in 1852. In May 1853 he completed *The Isle of the Cross*. The Harpers rejected that book, which was subsequently lost; he might have burned it. But because his past book failures had left him in debt to them, they permitted him to write anonymously for their magazine. He also wrote for the periodical *Putnam's*. Over the next year, for them he produced his greatest short stories: "Bartleby, the Scrivener," whose "I would prefer not to" haunts us to this day, and the brooding, ironic "Benito Cereno," in which an apparent reality gets turned inside out. In both tales, we find the inverse of those youthful, good-hearted generalizations about otherness that stud the pages of the South Seas novels. Meanwhile, their author got rheumatism and defaulted on his debts.

"IN THE PAGES OF *MOBY-DICK* IS NOTHING LESS THAN THE GENETIC CODE OF AMERICA: ALL THE PROMISES, PROBLEMS, CONFLICTS AND IDEALS..."

Although Melville lived 40 years after *Moby-Dick*, they were hardly good years. Let me therefore heed the dictum put forth near the end of *Israel Potter*, his 1855 novel of the eponymous Yankee rebel imprisoned in Britain. "Best followed now is this life, by hurrying, like itself, to a close. Few things remain."

Having lost Arrowhead as a result of his debts, the family removed to New York. In 1857, *The Confidence-Man* was published. It earned him "not a penny." His various poems did no better, even his "impeccably patriotic" ones.

About the time the Civil War started, his generous father-in-law died; the legacy to Lizzie allowed her to provide for the family for a little while. In 1866 her husband finally got a job, drudging as a customs inspector in New York for a grand $4 per day. He kept at it for almost 20 years.

18

BY 1867, writes Hershel Parker, "the Shaws were saying Lizzie believed that Herman was insane." She seems to have considered separating from him. That same year their son Malcolm accidentally or deliberately shot himself in bed, dead at 18.

Nine years later, when Lizzie was helping him read the proofs for his vanity-published poem "Clarel" (which the New York *Independent* pronounced "destitute of interest or metrical skill"), she wrote in a letter that he was in "a frightfully nervous state."

In 1886 he finally retired from the customhouse. Five years later, with *Billy Budd*, another masterpiece, unfinished, he died—appropriately enough, of an enlarged heart. After running a belated obituary, the *New York Times* published a pleasant enough memorial "THE LATE HIRAM MELVILLE."

Fashions change. Now we praise Melville for his darkly beautiful obscurities, the oceanic swells of alterations from story to essay to joke and back again. In *Why Read Moby-Dick?*, an extravagant little volume from 2011, Nathaniel Philbrick interpreted that masterwork as a cosmic repository for our national destiny: "Contained in the pages of *Moby-Dick* is nothing less than the genetic code of America: all the promises, problems, conflicts, and ideals that contributed to the outbreak of a revolution in 1775 as well as a civil war in 1861 and continue to drive this country's ever-contentious march into the future."

I praise Melville because in at least one way he was an ideal American: He celebrated the equality of *all* our brothers and sisters. How many other Americans of his era could have written so tolerantly, even lovingly, of the tattooed cannibal harpooner Queequeg? "And what is it, thought I, after all! It's only his outside; a man can be honest in any sort of skin." Whether or not Queequeg ever existed, or Fayaway was Peue, Melville brought Polynesia back within him, and showed his great-heartedness by honoring it.

19

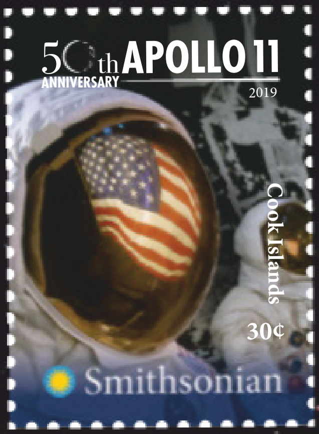
AND NOW EVER AFTER when I reread *Typee,* I will remember the emerald green jungle; *Omoo* is all ocean and islands, blue and green. *Moby-Dick* encompasses the two poles of colorlessness: deep undersea darkness, the ultimate destination of the *Pequod* and all of us, which is to say the home of the white whale.

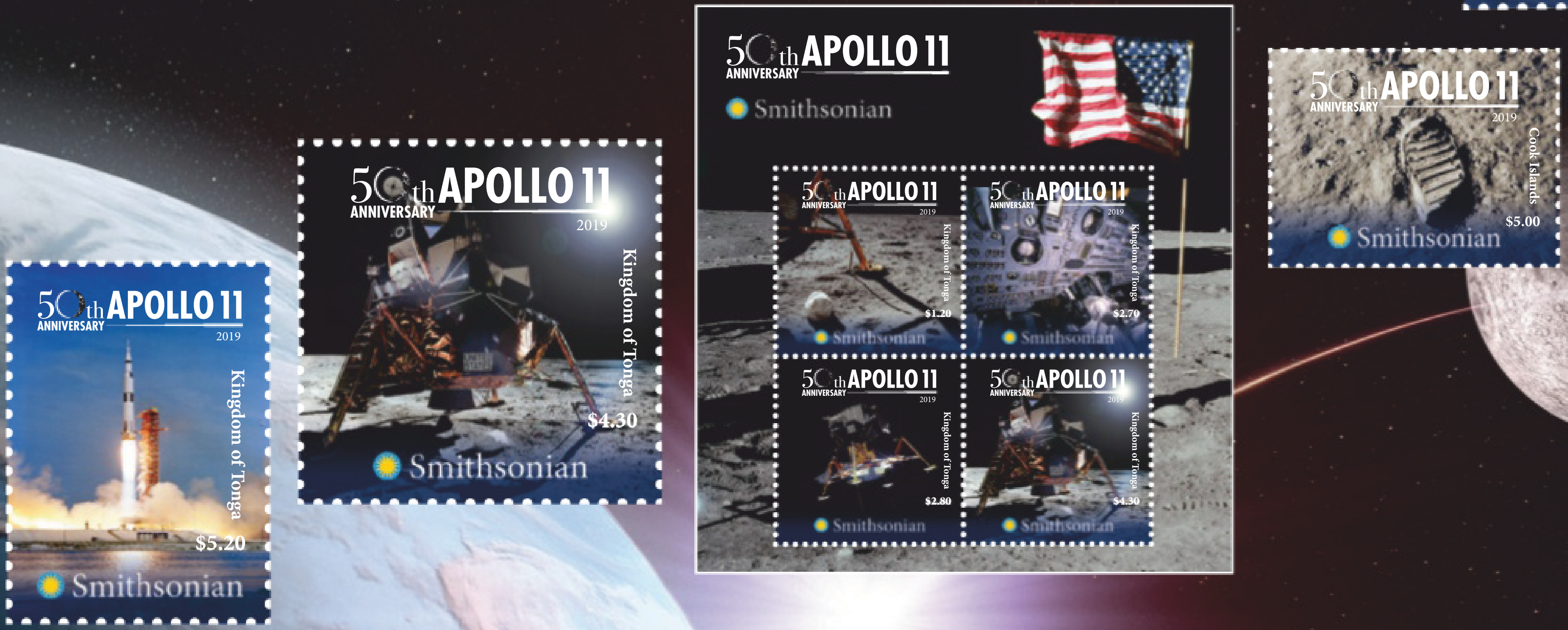
But no—while I call *Typee* an emerald book, anyone who craves the dark depths of *Moby-Dick* need only descend the wriggling road below those smoothed-out saw blades of the Taipi Valley, with the night clouds still faintly luminescent, the valley black with ferns and leaves leaping at the eye at each switchback, the abyss itself a reified negation.

Here comes another banana tree, a golden spider in the headlights. The dark mountains go higher and higher up the windshield; the road stays pallidly ugly. Infrequently I glimpse white trunks of trees in the darkness; I smell humus. By now we have descended so far that the sky is nearly out of sight. A little more than 500 feet from the trail to the "tohua Melville," I discern nothing but darkness between the pale trees. Then we are there, with the plants like white skeletons, drowning in more darkness; from down there where Melville used to live, I smell moss, and hear a dreary rustling. ◆

50th APOLLO 11 ANNIVERSARY

The Unimaginable, Accomplished





Smithsonian

50th Anniversary Apollo 11 Postage Stamp Collection by Philatelic Mint

Twenty-seven official postage stamps commemorating this event displayed in an educational presentation packet

Throughout the ages, men and women have gazed at the Moon in wonder. The Moon had long been a source of mystery, the subject of poetry and dreams—a distant object humankind could only imagine. With the dawn of a new era, though, that began to change. On May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy set forth a challenging new goal for the United States: perform a crewed lunar landing and return safely to Earth before the end of the decade. On July 16, 1969, the crew of Apollo 11 set out to achieve this goal – being the first to land on the Moon. Four days later, on July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong took "one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind," becoming the first person to set foot on another planetary body.

Now, 50 years later, we celebrate this momentous event, which has led us to think of the Moon as a destination beckoning us toward its continued exploration, now and in the years to come.

From the launch of Apollo 11, through its journey to the Moon and back, the world watched. With excitement and tension building from lift-off to splashdown, humankind stood in awe, witnessing three brave men, Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin, as their craft maneuvered through re-entry and splashed down in the Pacific Ocean.

Licensed by the Smithsonian, Philatelic Mint and island nations from the South Pacific have now issued postage stamps honoring the mission accomplished by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the three men who dared to do what no one had done before...land on the Moon.

Now you can join in celebrating this historic event with a stunning limited edition collection of postage stamps developed in collaboration with the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, a collection that walks you through the wonders of the journey that the world held its collective breath to watch 50 years ago.

In July 1969 the United States Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp to honor the event, picturing Mission Commander Neil Armstrong planting the US flag on the lunar surface. We are privileged to have a limited number of that 1969 US stamp, and to offer it to you as part of this collection on a first come, first served basis.

Order *Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum*
50th Anniversary Apollo 11 Postage Stamp Collection by Philatelic Mint:
www.pmintstamps.com, call 866.775.9642 or fill out & mail form below.

___Enclosed is my payment of $37.00
___Please charge my credit card indicated below for $37.00
(Price includes free shipping)

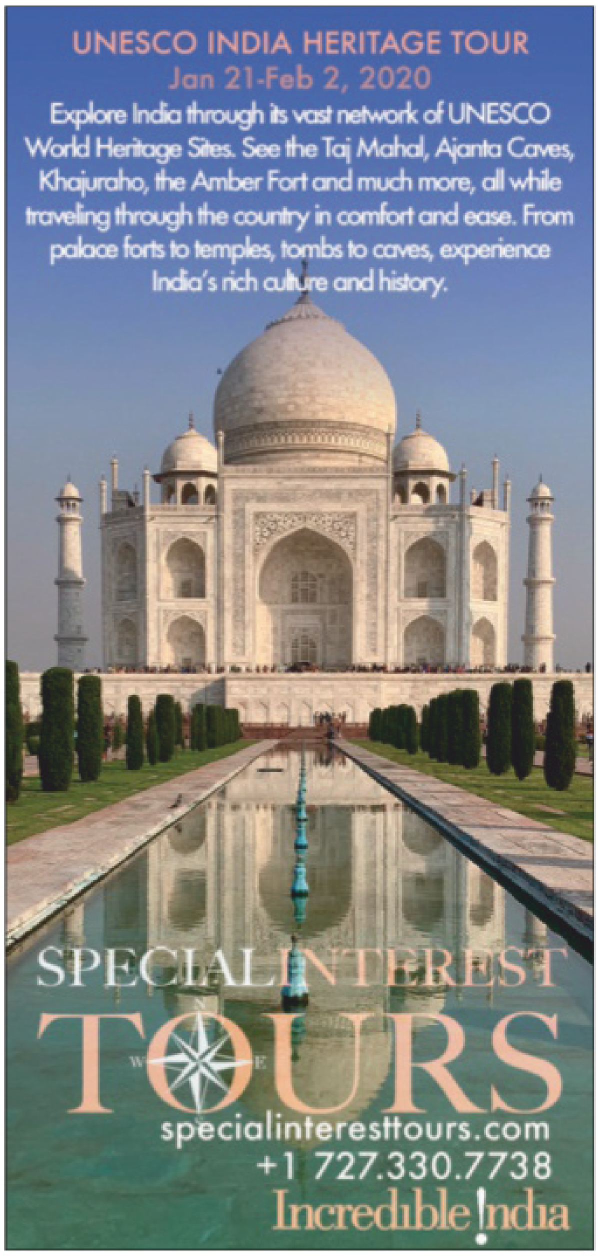
Name______________________________
Address______________________________
City____________________ State______ Zip ________
Credit Card#________________ Exp Date_____ Security Code______

Make Checks payable to:
Philatelic Mint, Inc. Post Office Box 3162, Sag Harbor NY 11963

All orders subject to availability. Allow 4-6 weeks delivery. **30 day money-back guarantee.**
Philatelic Mint Inc. reserves the right to limit this offer to two per customer.

©Philatelic Mint, Inc. 2019

Toll Free: 866.775.9642 | **Order Now: pmintstamps.com** | Email: info@pmintstamps.com



UNESCO INDIA HERITAGE TOUR
Jan 21-Feb 2, 2020

Explore India through its vast network of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. See the Taj Mahal, Ajanta Caves, Khajuraho, the Amber Fort and much more, all while traveling through the country in comfort and ease. From palace forts to temples, tombs to caves, experience India's rich culture and history.

SPECIAL INTEREST TOURS
specialinteresttours.com
+1 727.330.7738
Incredible !ndia

Maine Windjammer Cruises®

Traditional sailing adventures onboard Historic National Landmark Windjammers. No cruise is complete without our famous Lobster Feast! Four cruise options weekly. Affordable & All Inclusive.

CONTACT US FOR OUR FREE 16-PAGE BROCHURE

800-736-7981
MaineWindjammerCruises.com

THE NINE PLANETS RING
HANDCRAFTED WITH AN ORBITING GIBEON METEORITE BAND IN 18K GOLD SET WITH 9 GEMSTONES

NINEPLANETSRING.COM
831.336.1020

www.motionmodels.com
THE WORLDS FINEST READY-MADE AND CUSTOM TRUE MUSEUM QUALITY AIRPLANE AND NAVY AND COAST GUARD SHIP MODELS

USS G.H.W. BUSH CVN-77 CUSTOM MADE FOR PRESIDENT BUSH AND NORTHROP GRUMMAN

WE CAN MAKE ANY NAVY/COAST GUARD SHIP. WE DO NOT SELL OR BUILD KITS.

WE CAN MAKE ANY SUBMARINE MODEL

www.motionmodels.com
1-800-866-3172

SAVING A LIFE EVERY 11 MINUTES!

I live alone but I'm never alone. I have Life Alert®

HELP AT HOME

with GPS!

HELP ON THE GO

FREE! FIRST AID KIT when you order now!

Life Alert®

For a FREE brochure call:
1-800-826-4013

AMERICAN CLASSIC

FREE Shipping: N5826

Be Glad You Waited
Now Only $59

The Legendary 1904-O Morgan Silver Dollar, Brilliant Uncirculated

In 1962, the 1904-O New Orleans Mint Morgan silver dollar was one of the three most expensive in the series. Mint-state issues listed for $350 and only a few thousand were known to exist in any condition. Then hundreds of bags of pristine 1904-O Morgans emerged during the last Treasury releases. Today, no other BU in the entire series costs so little compared to its peak price. **$59 (#44963).** *New customers only. Limit 2 per household.* NO CLUBS TO JOIN; NO ON-APPROVAL COINS SENT. **30-Day No-Risk Home Examination: Money-Back Guarantee.**

International Coins & Currency
62 Ridge Street, Dept. N5826, Montpelier, VT 05602
1-800-451-4463
www.iccoin.com/n5826

FREE Report $15⁰⁰ value

H₂O Scams Exposed

Learn the truth about distilled, mineral, tap, spring, filtered, bottled, well, alkalized, reverse osmosis and more...

© 2007-2019 Waterwise Inc

Call or visit: www.waterwise.com/smi
800-874-9028 Ext 783
Waterwise Inc • PO Box 494000 • Leesburg FL 34749

Advertise in the OCTOBER ISSUE
Secrets of American History

Contact Susan today!
susan@mi-ms.com or
860-542-5180

18+

WHAT IS

AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME -

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages
Brand new content
One site

AVXLIVE.ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu

BIG THICKET
Coin and Bullion, LLC

THE TRUSTED NAME IN PRECIOUS METALS

$20 LIBERTY HEAD
1850–1907 MS-62
Only $1475
(LIMIT 10)

2019 1/10 OZ GAE
1% OVER DEALER COST
(LIMIT 20)

2019 SILVER AMERICAN EAGLES
$3.50 OVER SPOT
(LIMIT 20)

$10 INDIAN HEAD
1907–1933 MS-62
Only $750
(LIMIT 10)

ICTA

AD CODE **SMITH719**

BigThicketCoin.com
855-423-GOLD (4653)

ENDLESS CREATIVITY.
UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES.

WhiteWalls® Magnetic Dry-Erase
Whiteboard Wall Panels

MAGNATAG® Visible Systems

WhiteWalls.com
800-624-4154

THE MAINE WINDJAMMER ASSOCIATION

Pure Sail.
Pure Bliss.

Photo Courtesy: Fred LeBlanc

3- to 10-Night Sailing Adventures Along the Maine Coast

Treat yourself to an amazing, all-inclusive trip aboard one of our 8 historic windjammers.

Unplugged. Unmatched. Unbelievably Fun.

1-844-807-WIND
sailmainecoast.com/sm

Request a Brochure Packet Today!

AMERICA'S ORIGINAL
Walk-Behind Brush Mower!

USA ENGINEERED & BUILT*

Starting at just
$1599.99

*Assembled in the USA using domestic and foreign parts.

The DR® Field & Brush Mower just got even better—

FASTER. Up to 20 HP and 34"-wide cut for faster mowing!

EASIER. Power steering gives you fingertip control.

NEW CHOICES: including PTO and tow-behind models for tractors and ATVs.

FREE SHIPPING | **6 MONTH TRIAL**

SOME LIMITATIONS APPLY

Go Online or Call for FREE DVD & Info Kit!

1A267X © 2019

DRfieldbrush.com
TOLL FREE **800-582-1784**

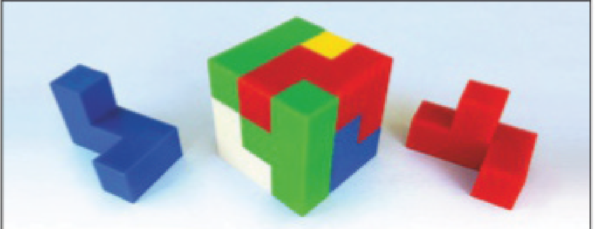
PROFESSIONAL POWER DR DONE RIGHT

ROLL-UP PANAMA

100% handwoven straw from Ecuador. Finished in USA. 3-1/4 brim gives UPF 50+ sun protection. Roll-up easy packing.
Sizes: S-2XL.
Colors: Light natural/black ribbon, Dark natural/brown ribbon.
$110.
S/H $15
Dept S079

John Helmer Haberdasher
969 S.W. Broadway, Portland, OR 97205
www.johnhelmer.com | 866-855-4976

WORLD'S HARDEST PUZZLE



And also some easy ones. Stimulate your mind, or that of a child with this more universal version of the Soma shape puzzle. 33 pieces configure into 20,000 specific puzzles graded from easy to hard in a 52 page code book. One or two person play, can handicap by difficulty.

zobristcube.com or
amazon.com "zobrist cube™"

OWN A PIECE OF AMERICANA!

Abraham Lincoln's Pocket Knife

Certificate of Authenticity
Abraham Lincoln's Pocket Knife
Abraham Lincoln's Pocket Knife
William Gilchrist's Celebrated Razor Steel
Sheffield, UK

On the night of April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth entered Ford's Theater and shot President Abraham Lincoln. In Lincoln's pockets that night were 9 items, one of which was his favorite, six-bladed "Congress" pocketknife.

- ★ **Lincoln's original in the Library of Congress**
- ★ Celebrated Razor Steel Blades
- ★ Certificate of Authenticity
- ★ Brass Pins & Nickel Silver Bolsters
- ★ Deluxe Ash Case with Velvet Cushion
- ★ Collector's prize, not available after this offer!

$119
S&H Included

lincolnpocketknife.com

Inside the Hall of Names, a repository of photographs and biographies of millions of Holocaust victims, at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial and museum.

Holy Land

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

into exile. The haggadah was saved from Catholic book burning by a priest in Venice in 1609, and, by the 19th century, had made its way to Sarajevo, where in early 1942 Korkut saved the book from Nazi looters, hiding it among Qurans in a mosque. Fifty years later, Sarajevo's own celebrated convivencia was ripped apart by ethnic cleansing during the Bosnian War. This time, another Muslim librarian rescued the haggadah as the museum was being shelled. For many, the book has come to symbolize how an ideal of multiplicity—of religion, of ethnicity, of culture—can survive, if only enough people care.

Novelists live by imagining the unlikely, and walking in Yad Vashem's sun-dappled, pine-fragrant shade, my mind drifts to an alternate narrative in which that Syrian border in the north isn't filled with skeins of razor wire, and a person of any background or creed could hop in her car and drive those 37 miles for dinner in a peaceful Damascus. It's the kind of reverie that feels irresistible when visiting this place.

Back in 1991, when I was still a foreign correspondent, I asked people across the region to play this mind game with me on the eve of the Madrid Peace Conference, the first time Israeli and Palestinian officials sat down publicly to speak about an accord. At first, everyone shrugged off my question: Peace was impossible, the hatred ran too deep.

But when I prodded, they began to unspool wondrous visions of a golden age of friendship and prosperity, a convivencia for a new era. A Palestinian shipping magnate exiled in Jordan dreamed of plunging into the surf at Caesarea, as he used to as a child. A Syrian man longed to visit the place his parents had honeymooned on the West Bank. An Israeli cartoonist told me he just wanted to "sit and schmooze over coffee, like normal neighbors."

It was bittersweet to recall those conversations, yet it seemed apt to reflect on such possibilities at Yad Vashem. Israel and Germany had become staunch allies less than half a century after the Second World War. Who had a right to say peace was unthinkable?

When I rejoin our group, they are meeting with Berthe Badehi, a Holocaust survivor who spent her childhood hiding from Nazis among French farmers. After the war, she immigrated to Israel, and she recalls her astonishment the first time she went to the bustling food market of Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda. "There were Jews everywhere," she says. "I had been in hiding all my life. Finally, here was a place to be myself."

But there was a high price. In 2002, her oldest grandson was killed at 22, when he was part of an army unit attempting to free Israeli soldiers trapped inside Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's besieged compound headquarters during the Second Intifada. She shows us a picture of the young man, and Oded gasps. He recognizes him. He embraces Berthe, and tells her that he lives in the same community as another of her grandsons, where every year they commemorate her elder grandson's death. It is another reminder of the intimacy and interconnectedness of this society.

THE NEXT MORNING, we visit the "City of David," an extensive and glossily presented archaeological

No contracts
No cancellation fees

jitterbug
flip

Easier is better with the Jitterbug.

jitterbug
866-
400-
8846
CALL?
Spkr
on/off
YES
NO
1
2 ABC
3 DEF
4 GHI
5 JKL
6 MNO
7 PQRS
8 TUV
9 WXYZ
*
0 +
#
5★

The Jitterbug® Flip, from the creators of the original easy-to-use cell phone, has big buttons and an exclusive 5Star® Urgent Response button on the keypad.

Plans as low as
$14.99 month*

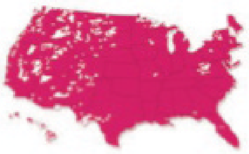
EASY TO USE Today, cell phones are hard to hear, difficult to dial and overloaded with features you may never use. That's not the case with the Jitterbug Flip. A large screen and big buttons make it easy to call family and friends. The powerful speaker ensures every conversation will be loud and clear. Plus, straightforward YES and NO buttons make navigating the menu simple.

EASY TO ENJOY Wherever you go, a built-in camera makes it easy and fun for you to capture and share your favorite memories. And a flashlight with a built-in magnifier helps you see in dimly lit areas. With all the features you need, the Jitterbug Flip also comes with a long-lasting battery, so you won't have to worry about running out of power.

EASY TO BE PREPARED Life has a way of being unpredictable, but you can be prepared in any uncertain or unsafe situation with 5Star Service. Simply press the 5Star button to be connected immediately with a highly-trained Urgent Response Agent who will confirm your location, evaluate your situation and get you the help you need, 24/7.

The Jitterbug Flip is one of the most affordable cell phones on the market and comes with dependable nationwide coverage. Friendly customer service representatives will help figure out which phone plan is best for you, and with no contracts or cancellation fees, you can switch plans anytime. You can even keep your current landline or cell phone number. **Ask about our great new rate plans, now with more minutes!**

Powered by the nation's largest and most dependable wireless network.



NO CONTRACTS
No cancellation fees

Buy now and get a FREE Car Charger, a $25 value!

To order or learn more, call
1-866-400-8846
or visit greatcall.com/Flip

Why the Jitterbug Flip is your best choice for a new cell phone:				
No contracts to sign, ever	Keep your current phone number	Free U.S.-based customer service	No hidden monthly fees	Brain Games powered by Posit Science®

Available at: BEST BUY RITE AID

greatcall.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS ACCREDITED

*Monthly fees do not include government taxes or assessment surcharges and are subject to change. Plans and services may require purchase of a GreatCall device and a one-time setup fee of $35. 5Star or 9-1-1 calls can be made only when cellular service is available. 5Star Service tracks an approximate location of the device when the device is turned on and connected to the network. GreatCall does not guarantee an exact location. Car charger will be mailed to customer after the device is activated. Jitterbug, GreatCall, and 5Star are registered trademarks of GreatCall, Inc. Copyright ©2019 GreatCall, Inc.

UNITED STATES POSTAGE
3
WIN THE WAR
3¢
POSTAGE
1779 U.S. POSTAGE 1929
GEORGE ROGERS CLARK
COMMEMORATIVE
VINCENNES
2 CENTS 2

3 Classic Mint U.S. Stamps FREE

Stamps at least 50 years old!

Reply Today!

☐ **Yes!** Send me three Classic Mint Postage Stamps – FREE! These stamps are hard to find!

Send today for your three classic US stamps (stamps may vary) and you'll also receive special collector's information and other interesting stamps on approval. Limit one collection. Special offer for new customers only.

Quick order at MysticAd.com/GK50F

Name ____________________

Address ____________________

City/State/Zip ____________________

Send coupon to: Mystic Stamp Company, Dept. GK50F
9700 Mill St., Camden, New York 13316-9111

dig just outside the southern wall of the Old City. Excavations have uncovered the ruins of a large palace possibly built during the Davidic era (c. 1000 B.C.), as well as the probable source of the ancient city's water supply. I had been here before, researching *The Secret Chord*, a novel I wrote about the life of King David. Then, as now, the excavations fueled my imagination, conjuring the city as it is described in the Bible, rising up out of the crumbled stones, peopled with musicians and artisans.

Our guide to the site, a British immigrant to Israel, is a practiced presenter who radiates enthusiasm as he describes a recent discovery: a processional way closely matching details from the story of young Solomon, mounted on his father's mule, anointed king by Tzadok the priest and Nathan the prophet—a ceremony still enacted at every British royal coronation.

For a person like me, who excavates the past for fiction, it's easy to get swept up by all of this. But I am shaken from my daydream when we tour Silwan, the predominantly Palestinian village that sits atop the excavations. Our guide here is neither practiced nor fluent in English, just an old man in a dingy robe who fears for his neighborhood. Many of the humble dwellings here are cracking, undermined by the excavations, and others have been occupied by Jewish settlers. There is palpable tension, as Palestinians sidle warily past armed Israeli guards to reach their homes, while Israeli school buses have mesh over the windows to protect against stones, Molotov cocktails, or worse. If this was, indeed, the site of David's city, I imagine he would despair to find it in such a state.

Our final stop is a close-up look at the separation barrier, which, when it is completed, is designed to carve the landscape for 440 miles. The first sections were built in 2003, at the height of the Second Intifada, when, Israel says, it was necessary to prevent suicide bombings, which have practically ceased since. But for Palestinians, the wall has meant further loss of land; in some places, families have been separated, and many farmers have lost access to their own fields.

In 2017, the British artist Banksy

No contracts
No cancellation fees

jitterbug
smart2

Signal
Wi-Fi Off
BT Off
High
100%
12:45 PM
Home
Options
Phone
Voicemail
Text Messages
Camera
Internet
Email Messages
Maps & Directions
Lively by GreatCall
BACK
HOME
CALL 5★

The simplest smartphone ever.

The Jitterbug® Smart2 from GreatCall® is the simplest smartphone with a simple menu, large screen and exclusive health and safety services.

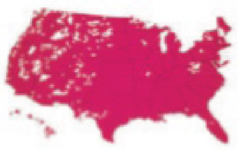
EASY Everything you want to do, from texting and taking pictures, to emailing and getting directions, is organized in a single list on one screen with large, legible letters. Plus, Voice Typing makes writing emails and texts effortless.

Plans with data as low as $17.48 month*

SMART Turn your Jitterbug Smart2 into a personal safety device with GreatCall's 5Star® Urgent Response Service and exclusive health apps.

AFFORDABLE GreatCall has a variety of data plans starting as low as $2.49 per month. Compared to other cell phone companies, you could save over $300 per year. **Ask about our great new rate plans, now with more minutes!**

Powered by the nation's largest and most dependable wireless network.



NO CONTRACTS
No cancellation fees

Buy now and get a FREE Car Charger, a $25 value!

Available at:

BEST BUY
RITE AID

Why the Jitterbug Smart2 is your best choice for a new smartphone:

No contracts to sign, ever	Free U.S.-based customer service and technical support	Keep your current phone number	No hidden monthly fees	Affordable, flexible plans

greatcall

For more information on pricing, plans, and coverage visit **GreatCall.com** or call **1-800-650-5479**

CONSUMER AFFAIRS ACCREDITED

*Monthly fees do not include government taxes or assessment surcharges and are subject to change. Plans and services may require purchase of a GreatCall device and a one-time setup fee of $35. $300 savings calculation based on market leaders' lowest available monthly published fees. 5Star or 9-1-1 calls can be made only when cellular service is available. 5Star Service tracks an approximate location of the device when the device is turned on and connected to the network. GreatCall does not guarantee an exact location. Car charger will be mailed to customer after the device is activated. Jitterbug, GreatCall and 5Star are registered trademarks of GreatCall, Inc. Copyright ©2019 GreatCall, Inc.

Are you feeling RED

irwin naturals
Brain Awake RED
with Nitric Oxide Booster
Supports Blood Flow, Boosts Performance, Promotes Focus and Mental Clarity
60 Liquid Soft-Gels
DIETARY SUPPLEMENT

Specially Formulated with a Nitric Oxide Booster, to Help Optimize Performance in fast-acting liquid soft-gels.

Save $2.00 online at: www.IrwinNaturals.com by entering coupon code: 013950

BRAIN AWAKE RED
SAVE $2

EXPIRES: 10/31/19 MANUFACTURERS COUPON

Consumer: Redeemable at retail locations only. Not valid for online or mail-order purchases. Retailer: Irwin Naturals will reimburse you for the face value plus 8 (cents) handling provided it is redeemed by a consumer at the time of purchase on the brand specified. Coupons not properly redeemed will be void and held. Reproduction by any party by any means is expressly prohibited. Any other use constitutes fraud. Irwin Naturals reserves the right to deny reimbursement (due to misredemption activity) and/or request proof of purchase for coupon(s) submitted. Mail to: CMS Dept. 10363, Irwin Naturals, 1 Fawcett Drive, Del Rio, TX 78840. Cash value: .001 (cents). Void where taxed or restricted. ONE COUPON PER PURCHASE. Not valid for mail order/websites. Retail only.

0710363-013950

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food & Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Follow Us On...

Introducing the World's 1st—

Battery-Powered Trimmer on Wheels!

62 VOLT
LITHIUM-ION
POWER!
ALL-NEW
PULSE 62V
Model!

ALL THE POWER OF GAS in a 62V fuel cell that lets you TRIM and MOW for up to 40 minutes on a single charge.

BUILT FOR EASE OF USE—just 45 lbs, with ergonomic handlebars, foam comfort grips, push-button electric starting, *PLUS* the easiest and fastest cord changing system on the market!

1A296X © 2019

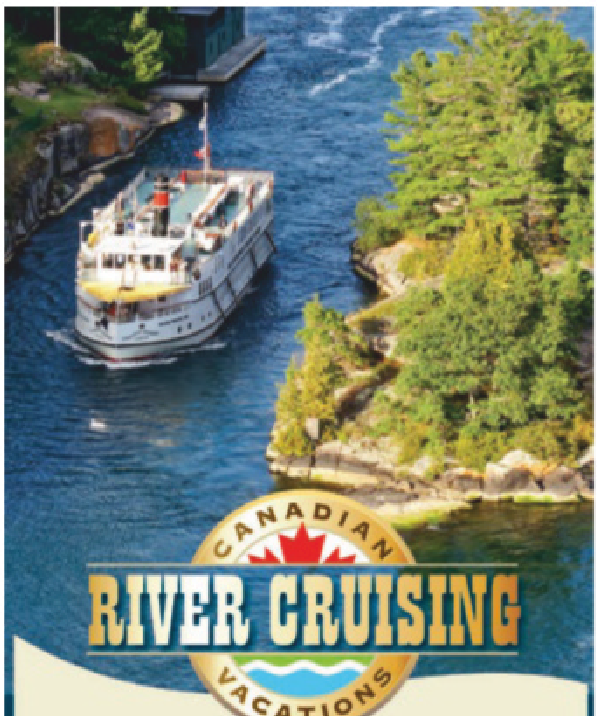
See the FULL LINE of DR® Trimmer Mowers—Gas-Powered, Tow-Behind and PTO models!

FREE SHIPPING | 6 MONTH TRIAL

SOME LIMITATIONS APPLY

Go Online or Call for FREE DVD & Info Kit!

DRtrimmers.com
TOLL FREE 800-582-1784



CANADIAN RIVER CRUISING VACATIONS

Experience the very best of Canada's St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers:
The 1000 Islands, the International Seaway, historic attractions and world-class cities.
4, 5, 6, 7 night cruises aboard the nostalgic, 32 stateroom replica steamboat CANADIAN EMPRESS.
Quebec City, Ottawa, Kingston Departures
Call today to request our 2019 travel brochure

1-800-267-7868

TICO #2168740

www.StLawrenceCruiseLines.com

253 Ontario St., Suite 200 Kingston, ON K7L 2Z4

opened the Walled Off Hotel, not far from Bethlehem. Billed as the hotel with "the worst view in the world," it is hard up against a soaring concrete section of the Palestinian side of the barrier, which has become a canvas for portraits of Palestinian resistance figures and for sarcastic graffiti: *"In my previous life I was the Berlin Wall. The beer was better there." "Make hummus not walls."* The hotel is part political statement, part immersive artwork, with edgy décor like the bullet-strafed water tank that fills the hot tub in the presidential suite. A sardonic multimedia account of the conflict, delivered in a plummy British-colonial accent, concludes with the line: "If you are not completely baffled, then you don't understand."

Visitors nod in agreement.

WE SHARE A FAREWELL DINNER at the Eucalyptus, a kosher restaurant in Jerusalem, where the Israeli chef, Moshe Basson, explains how he uses indigenous ingredients, including many frequently mentioned in the Bible—hyssop, dates, pomegranate, almonds.

Over an array of fragrant dishes, the guests share the lessons of an intense week.

"Before I came, I didn't know what I didn't know," observes Kim Morton.

"I came thinking I was going to hear two sides," says Roger Bennett. "Now I've figured out there are many more than two sides."

For Craig Linn, the most enlightening moment came in Yad Vashem. "The need for security is so great," he says. "When Berthe says, 'I just wanted a place where I could be myself.'" He pauses, recalling the emotion of the moment. "But then, the Palestinians feel that, too. . . . "

Cathy Long, who is a generation older than our guides, takes a personal tone. "I'm leaving all of this feeling you two are my sons," she says, her voice catching. "I just wish there was an answer, something we could do, so that your kids could be safer." Oded, who has two small children, is clearly moved. "I hope that next time you come, there will be something more positive to show you," he says. "But you help by keeping an open heart, and by being curious about everything."

ADVENTURE CANADA
2018 CERTIFICATE of EXCELLENCE
tripadvisor
#1 Best Adventure Cruise Line
USA Today Readers' Choice 2018
© Dennis Minty

Climate change up close

Experience the Arctic with scientists, explorers, and Inuit guides on an ice-class expedition vessel, the *Ocean Endeavour*. Search for polar bears, seals, walruses, and whales in their ever-changing icy habitat. Learn about climate change from local experts, and discover how the people, wildlife, and landscapes of the Arctic are being affected.

Adventure Canada's award-winning **small-ship expeditions to the Arctic and sub-Arctic** engage, educate, and entertain. We connect people to the land and to each other through wildlife, culture, learning, and fun.

Northwest Passage · Canadian High Arctic
Greenland · Iceland

adventurecanada.com | **1.800.363.7566**
14 Front Street South, Mississauga, ON, L5H 2C4 Canada. TICO Reg# 4001400

FIRST TO THE MOON
LIBERTY
IN GOD WE TRUST
1969

"We choose to go to the moon."
JFK, September 12, 1962

CELEBRATE AMERICA'S
RACE TO SPACE

NEW! 36-Coin Subscription Program only from Littleton Coin Company

Recall the *Apollo 11* space voyage in 1969 which met JFK's challenge to put a man on the moon! With the new **America's Race to Space** 36-coin subscription program from Littleton, you'll collect Kennedy half dollars enhanced with full-color images of *Apollo 11*, plus other space missions and accomplishments leading up to and following the first moon landing.

JOIN TODAY & SAVE OVER 25% on your 1st shipment – ONLY $24.95 ***(reg. ~~$34.85~~)!***

- One colorized coin depicting *Apollo 11* astronaut Buzz Aldrin walking on the moon
- **Plus,** a 1969 Uncirculated 40% silver Kennedy half
- **FREE** display folder for your coins, including informative story cards
- **FREE** 2019 Uncirculated Kennedy half dollar

Then with each 2-coin monthly shipment you:

- **SAVE OVER 15%** at $24.95 each *(reg. ~~$29.90~~)*
- **FREE Shipping**

Plus:

- **FREE** gifts, including 2 more FREE folders with later shipments.

SAVE OVER 25%!

AMERICA'S RACE TO SPACE

FREE Gifts!

©2019 LCC, Inc.

Join online at LittletonCoin.com/SpaceRace or mail coupon

Your credit card will automatically be charged $24.95 each month. Cancel at any time.

☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ AMEX ☐ DISC

No checks accepted.

Card #: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Exp. Date ☐☐/☐☐

Name ______________________________
Please print clearly

Address ______________________ Apt# ______

City ______________ State _____ Zip ________

E-Mail ______________________________

45-Day Money Back Guarantee of Satisfaction

*We are required by law to collect sales tax on orders (& subsequent Club shipments) for the following states. For orders paid by credit card, we will calculate and charge the tax required by law. Tax requirements are subject to change, visit LittletonCoin.com/TaxInfo for the up-to- date list. AR,CA,DC,HI,IA,KY,MA,MD,ME,MN,MS,NJ, NM,NV,NY,OH,OK,TN,VA,VT,WI,WV

Littleton Coin Company®

Dept. RSB3 1309 Mt. Eustis Rd
Littleton NH 03561-3737

America's Favorite Coin Source
TRUSTED SINCE 1945

Darwin Panama

A warm weather hat with Australian styling, handwoven in Ecuador from toquilla fiber. Water resistant coating, braided kangaroo leather band. Reinforced 4½" crown, 3" brim. Finished in USA.

S (6¾-6⅞) M (7-7⅛) L (7¼-7⅜)
XL (7½-7⅝) XXL (7¾)

#1649 Darwin Panama___$130

Panama Fedora

Classic sun protection handwoven in Ecuador from toquilla fiber. Water resistant coating, grosgrain ribbon band. Reinforced 4½" crown, 2½" brim. Finished in USA.

S (6¾-6⅞) M (7-7⅛) L (7¼-7⅜)
XL (7½-7⅝) XXL (7¾)

#1648 Panama Fedora___$105

Add $9 handling per order.
Satisfaction guaranteed.

Shop on davidmorgan.com or request our print catalog

#KB-354-PIN

#1746

#1622

Panama Hats from Ecuador
Northwest Jewelry Designs
Akubra® Hats from Australia

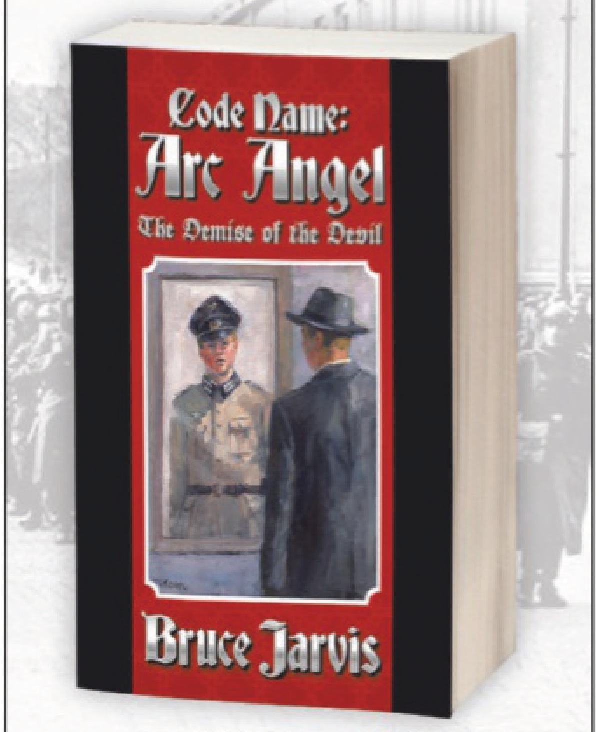
David Morgan

800-324-4934 davidmorgan.com

11812 N Creek Pkwy N, Ste 103•Bothell, WA 98011

IT IS 1940 AND
EUROPE IS IN CRISIS

This compelling thriller based on a true story, an American citizen turned spy must do everything in his power to stop a cycle of dark events before more innocent civilians die at the hands of a megalomaniac devil.



amazon BARNES&NOBLE iUniverse

CodeNameArcAngelBruceJarvis.com

SMITHSONIAN; July/August 2019; Volume 50, Number 4. *Smithsonian* (ISSN 0037-7333) is published monthly (except for a January/February issue and a July/August issue) by Smithsonian Enterprises, 600 Maryland Ave. S.W., Suite 6001, Washington, D.C. 20024. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C. and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Smithsonian Customer Service, P.O. Box 420300, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0300. Printed in the USA. Canadian Publication Agreement No. 40043911. Canadian return address: Asendia USA, PO Box 1051, Fort Erie, ON L2A 6C7.

We may occasionally publish extra issues. ©Smithsonian Institution 2019. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Editorial offices are at MRC 513, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, D.C. 20013 (202-633-6090). Advertising and circulation offices are at 420 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10170 (212-916-1300).

Memberships: All subscribers to Smithsonian are members of the Smithsonian Institution. Ninety-nine percent of dues is designated for magazine subscriptions.

Back Issues: To purchase a back issue, please call or email James Babcock at 212-916-1323 or babcockj@si.edu. Back issue price is $7.00 (U.S. funds).

Mailing Lists: From time to time we make our subscriber list available to companies that sell goods and services we believe would interest our readers. If you would rather not receive this information, please send your current mailing label, or an exact copy, to: Smithsonian Customer Service, P.O. Box 420300, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0300.

Subscription Service: Should you wish to change your address, or order new subscriptions, you can do so by writing Smithsonian Customer Service, P.O. Box 420300, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0300, or by calling 1-800-766-2149 (outside of U.S., call 1-386-246-0470).

NOTICE OF CHANGE TO MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNTS: Starting on September 30, 2019, Smithsonian National Associate members will no longer be eligible for discounts on new insurance policies purchased from GEICO. If you purchased a discounted policy through your Smithsonian membership, GEICO will continue to extend the discount to you for subsequent renewals. For a list of current benefits, please check www.smithsonianmag.com/member-services/. **Smithsonian reserves the right to change membership benefits at any time.**

Aziz concludes the meal by quoting the poem “Tourists,” by the celebrated Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai. The poem is shot through with bitterness about the way some tourists see his country, connecting more with its edifices than its people. In the last lines, a tour guide fixates on a Roman arch not far from the Tower of David, in the Old City.

Redemption will come
Only if their guide tells them,
“You see that arch from the
  Roman period?
It’s not important:
But next to it, left and down a bit,
There sits a man who’s bought fruit
  and vegetables for his family.”

The tower Amichai mentions is one of the most prominent features of the city’s ancient wall. When I was a young reporter covering the conflict, I would often sit in the evenings on a bench in the lovely old neighborhood across the valley, and gaze at the tower as the moon rose behind it, turning the stones pearly against a blushing sky. In those days, it provided a moment of solace after witnessing so much violence.

The morning after our final meal, as the group disperses to catch flights homeward, I visit the tower again. There is no weary man with his vegetables resting there today. In fact, as I climb the steps to the base of the tower, the area is unexpectedly deserted. For a few minutes, I’m alone.

When I was writing my novel about King David, I wanted to set a scene inside the tower that bears his name. But my research quickly revealed that the striking stone structure had nothing to do with him. King Hezekiah may have built the first tower on the site, long after David’s era. In time, that tower fell, and other structures rose in its place, as Jews, Romans, Byzantine Christians, Arabs, Crusaders and Ottoman Turks bled and died for control of these stones. The graceful edifice that stands today is actually a minaret—the remains of a mosque built in 1637.

And that makes it the perfect symbol of this land’s many-layered narratives, the inspired fictions we cling to and the painful truths we bury. ◆

Introducing
the future of personal transportation.
ZINGER
ZINGER

The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

It’s not a Wheelchair…

It’s not a Power Chair…

It’s a Zinger Chair!

More and more Americans are reaching the age where mobility is an everyday concern. Whether from an injury or from the aches and pains that come from getting older– getting around isn’t as easy as it used to be. You may have tried a power chair or a scooter. The ***Zinger*** is NOT a power chair or a scooter! The ***Zinger*** is quick and nimble, yet it is not prone to tipping like many scooters. Best of all, it weighs only 47.2 pounds and folds and unfolds with ease. You can take it almost anywhere, providing you with independence and freedom.

Years of work by innovative engineers have resulted in a mobility device that’s truly unique. They created a battery that provides powerful energy at a fraction of the weight of most batteries. The ***Zinger*** features two steering levers, one on either side of the seat. The user pushes both levers down to go forward, pulls them both up to brake, and pushes one while pulling the other to turn to either side. This enables great mobility, the ability to turn on a dime and to pull right up to tables or desks. The controls are right on the steering lever so it’s simple to operate and its exclusive footrest swings out of the way when you stand up or sit down. With its rugged yet lightweight aluminum frame, the ***Zinger*** is sturdy and durable yet convenient and comfortable! What’s more, it easily folds up for storage in a car seat or trunk– you can even gate-check it at the airport like a stroller. Think about it, you can take your ***Zinger*** almost anywhere, so you don’t have to let mobility issues rule your life. It folds in seconds without tools and is safe and reliable. It holds up to 275 pounds, and it goes up to 6 mph and operates for up to 8 hours on a single charge.

Why spend another day letting mobility issues hamper your independence and quality of life?

Zinger Chair®

Call now and receive a utility basket absolutely FREE with your order.

1-888-810-1955

Please mention code 111659 when ordering.

BBB
ACCREDITED BUSINESS
Rating of A+

Just think of the places you can go: • Shopping • Air Travel • Bus Tours • Restaurants– ride right up to the table! • Around town or just around your house

Zinger is not a wheelchair or medical device and is not covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

© 2019 *first*STREET for Boomers and Beyond, Inc.

83952

ask smithsonian

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS, WE'VE GOT EXPERTS

Q: Why don't people smile in old photographs?

Art Ross | Kingwood, Texas

ALTHOUGH WE TEND to think the subjects had to hold their faces still for an uncomfortably long time, exposures from the early days of commercial photography only lasted about 5 to 15 seconds. The real reason is that, in the mid-19th century, photography was so expensive and uncommon that people knew this photograph might be the only one they'd ever have made. Rather than flash a grin, they often opted to look thoughtful and serious, a carry-over from the more formal conventions of painted portraiture, explains Ann Shumard, senior curator of photographs at the National Portrait Gallery. When George Eastman, founder of Eastman Kodak, introduced hand-held cameras in 1888, it made photography more accessible and casual. Photos from around the turn of the 20th century include a lot more candids, and a lot more smiles.

Submit your queries at Smithsonian.com/ask

Q: Which animals have the best distance vision? Do animals experience near-sightedness and far-sightedness?

Laura Beamer | New York City

RHINOS AND BATS tend to be near-sighted, but they make up for it with superior hearing. Owls and eagles have the best vision; the latter can see distant objects eight times better than humans. While there might be individual animals that see worse than others in their species, survival of the fittest tends to weed them out. Steven Sarro, a supervisory biologist and curator at the National Zoo, says an owl with bad vision won't last long in the wild. Unlike a human, it can't fall back on glasses or Lasik surgery.

Q: When did Americans start to worry that foreigners were interfering with U.S. politics?

Anonymous

IN THE EARLIEST DAYS of the Republic, says Jon Grinspan, a curator at the National Museum of American History. During the French Revolution, a faction of conservative, pro-English Americans worried that radical Jacobins—who were beheading their compatriots in Paris—would try to meddle in U.S. politics. That fear led to the 1798 passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts, which, among other things, tightened restrictions on criticism of the government and loosened those on deportation of non-citizens. The fear of meddling rose next in the 1840s, when the anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic Know-Nothing Party saw new immigrants from Ireland as part of a papal plot to take over America.

Q: Why did the Vikings, who lived in Greenland alongside the Inuit for several hundred years, not spread European diseases like the Spaniards did several hundred years later?

Phyllis Schmutz | Nesconset, New York

LOCATION, for the most part, says William Fitzhugh, director of the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center. When the Norse arrived in 985, and until they left in the 1450s, they settled on the southwest coast of Greenland, far away from where any proto-Inuit people lived. Starting around 1350, the proto-Inuit Thule people migrated to this region. But unlike in the Americas, where trade was frequent, there was minimal interaction and no cohabitation between Europeans and indigenous people in Greenland. European diseases, like measles and tuberculosis, made their way to Greenland in the 17th and 18th centuries, as Denmark started to colonize the island.◆

Text by Anna Diamond

Illustration by **Lauren Simkin Berke**

DISCOVER
GREAT SAVINGS

#MEMBERDISCOUNT FOR SMITHSONIAN SUBSCRIBERS.

Get a quote, mention that you subscribe to Smithsonian Magazine, and you could save more with a special discount on auto insurance with GEICO.

GEICO® #MemberDiscount

geico.com/smith | 855-395-3421

Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. GEICO contracts with various membership entities and other organizations, but these entities do not underwrite the offered insurance products. Discount amount varies in some states. One group discount applicable per policy. Coverage is individual. In New York a premium reduction may be available. GEICO may not be involved in a formal relationship with each organization; however, you still may qualify for a special discount based on your membership, employment or affiliation with those organizations. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, D.C. 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. GEICO Gecko image © 1999-2018. © 2018 GEICO